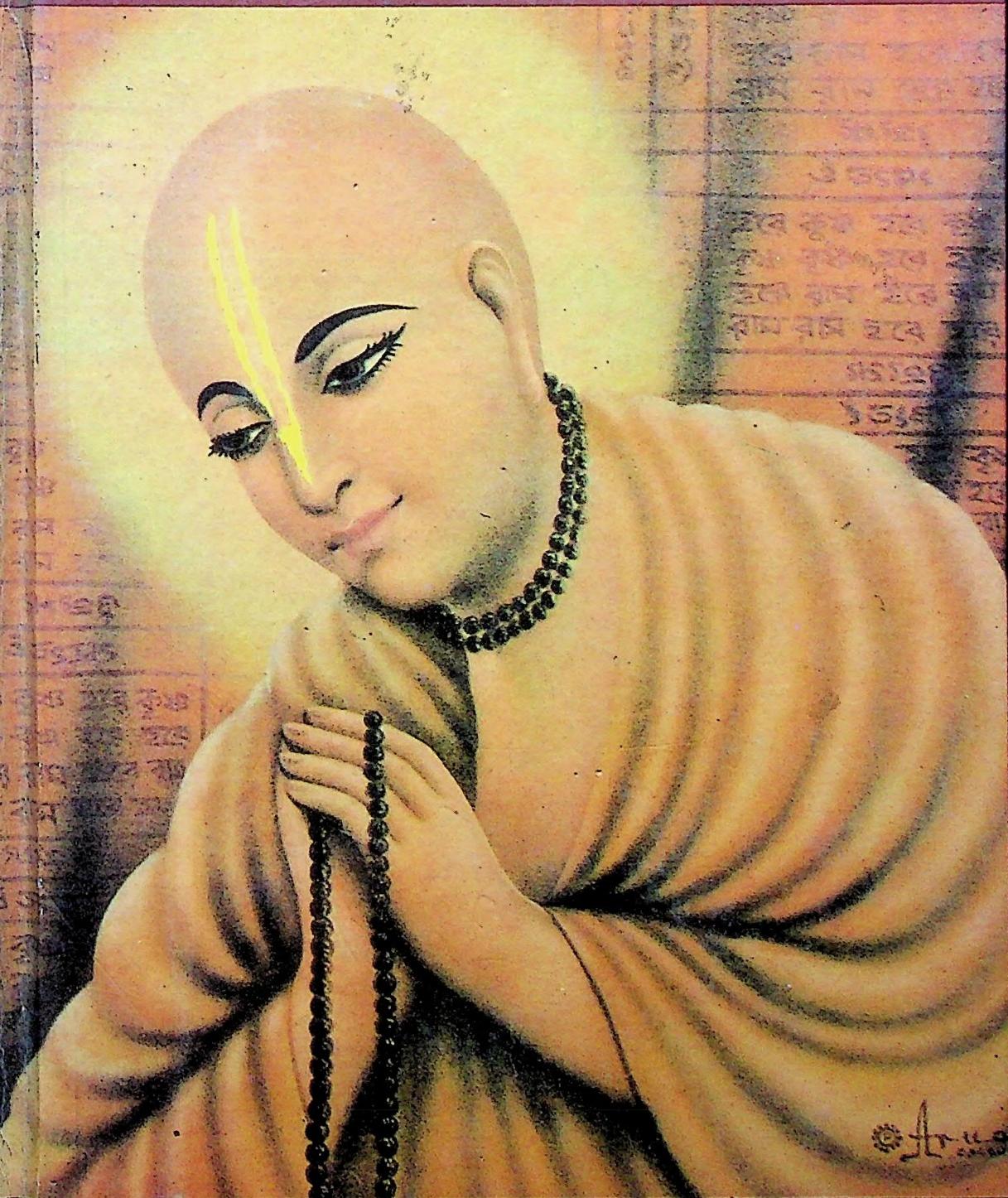


Lord Chaitanya



O.B.L. Kapoor

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LORD CHAITANYA

Complete biography of Sri Chaitanya
based on *Chaitanya-charitamrita*,
Chaitanya-bhagavata and
other authentic works



O.B.L. KAPOOR
(ADIKESHAV DAS)

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To
My Diksa Guru
Sri Srimad Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Thakur
and
My Shiksa Guru
Sri Srimad Gauranga Das Baba Ji Maharaj

ABBREVIATIONS

- Bh.* : *Srimad Bhagavata*
C.C. : *Chaitanya-charitamrita* by Sri Krishna Das Kaviraj
C.Bh. : *Chaitanya Bhagavata* by Vrindavan Das
Mahakavya : *Chaitanya-charitamrita Mahakavya* by Kavi-Karnapura
Kadacha : *Kadacha* by Murari Gupta
C.C.K. : *Chaitanya-chandrodaya* by Kavi-Karnapura
C.M. : *Chaitanya Mangal* by Lochan Das
Bh.R. : *Bhaktiratnakar* by Narahari Chakravarti
C.C.U. : *Chaitanya-Charitera Upadan* by Dr. V.B. Majumdar
C.C.P. : *Chaitanya-Chandramrita* by Prabodhanand Sarasvati

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PREFACE

Sri Chaitanya is the brightest of the luminaries that appeared from time to time on the spiritual firmament of the world. The intensity of his spiritual fervour, and the power he wielded of imparting divine love to turn the hardest of sinners into saints and make the fiercest of animals, like lions and bears, dance with the deer and does in *Sankirtan*, are unparalleled in history.

No wonder, because Sri Chaitanya was not an ordinary saint, but Sri Krishna Himself, Who came down on earth as a devotee with the twofold purpose of Himself tasting the bliss of devotion and showing the path of devotion to the fallen souls for their deliverance by His precepts as well as example.

No one need entertain any doubt regarding the divinity of Sri Chaitanya. The *Upanisads* and the *Puranas* provide ample proof of His divinity. But what proof can be greater than His own professions about His divinity. The prophets do not lie. Could anyone disbelieve Jesus when he professed that he was the son of God? How could anyone disbelieve Sri Chaitanya, when He professed that He was Krishna? He not only professed, but manifested Himself as Krishna to His devotees. Among the people, who saw Him as Krishna and believed, were the critics like

Advaitcharya, who would not believe without seeing and the learned logicians of Navadvip like Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya, who would not believe even in sunrise, if it was not proved by argument.

Since in Sri Chaitanya the Lord appeared as devotee, He was normally the very figure of humility. He regarded Himself as the lowliest of the lowly and behaved accordingly. If anyone called Him Bhagavan, He protested vehemently and felt like committing suicide. There were however occasions, when out of mercy for the devotees His divine Self had to manifest Itself as the God, they worshipped, and give them boons and blessings.

On account of the dual character of the personality of Sri Chaitanya, I had to face some difficulty in the use of pronouns for him. According to the usage in English language the first letter of the pronoun used for God is written in capital. I have generally avoided the capitals in the use of pronouns for him, because, though Bhagavan, he appears as Bhakta in this incarnation. When, however, he manifests Himself as Bhagavan, I have used the capitals. But there are occasions, when it becomes difficult to understand whether he acts as Bhagavan or Bhakta. On such occasions I have used my discretion.

Another difficulty I had to face was with regard to certain Sanskrit words, of which the English equivalent is inappropriate. In such cases I have used

the Sanskrit word itself and explained its meaning in the footnote. For instance *bhav* is generally translated as ‘emotion’ or ‘sentiment’. But in Sanskrit it means, besides ordinary emotion, trans-psychological emotion, which relates only to Bhagavan. It is the latter sense in which the term has here been mostly used. Similarly the word *darshan* is translated as ‘seeing’, but in Sanskrit or Hindi it implies, besides seeing in the ordinary sense, seeing with reverence and is generally used in this sense for seeing the deity or the holy persons and places.

I have not used diacritical marks in this work, because most readers are not familiar with them. To avoid mispronunciation by them of words, with which they may not be familiar, I have dropped the inherent “a” in the last consonant, because its sound is likely to be stretched and words like *kirtan* and *darshan* are likely to be pronounced as *kirtanā* and *darshanaā* and Ram and Govind as *Ramā* and *Govindā*.

I did not find any difficulty in collecting materials for the work, because every detail regarding the life of Sri Chaitanya has been recorded by his contemporary writers and poets and by the biographers, who lived immediately after him. The material, however, is scattered. Even the two most comprehensive and authoritative biographies of Sri Chaitanya, the *Chaitanya Bhagavata* by Vrindavan Das Thakur and *Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita* by Krishna Das Kaviraj, are incomplete in themselves. Vrindavan

Das deals mainly with the earlier life of Sri Chaitanya and Krishna Das Kaviraj mainly with his later life. Krishna Das Kaviraj skips most of the details relating to his earlier life, saying that they have been already described by Vrindavan Das. I have in this work put together the materials available from different authentic sources to make it a complete biography of Sri Chaitanya.

I must express my gratitude to Srimati Gaurapurnima Devi for kindly composing the work on the computer. I must also express my gratitude to my friend Sri Badrinarayana Bhagavata Bhushan for kindly adding this as one more work to the series of my earlier works published by him.

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CHAPTER I

WHY DID SRI KRISHNA APPEAR AS SRI KRISHNA CHAITANYA?

Sri Krishnadas Kaviraj, the author of *Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita*, says that Sri Krishna became Sri Krishna Chaitanya, the devotee *par excellence*, because He had the desire to relish *bhakti-rasa* as experienced by Radha, the very embodiment of Bhakti.¹ But is Krishna not perfect in all respects? Is not desire a sign of imperfection?

Desire in man is a sign of want or imperfection. Desire in Krishna is not a sign of imperfection, but of perfection or embellishment. It is not the kind of desire that springs from any kind of want or deficiency. It springs from fullness. It is like the spilling of boiling milk from a pot that is full up to the brim, or like the spontaneous bursting into laughter and the exercising of limbs of a healthy child, free from hunger and thirst. It is the spilling over of perfection.

Krishna by nature is Rasa—*raso vai sah*.² Rasa is concentrated *anand* or bliss. Anand in

¹ C. C., 1, 1, 6.

² *Taittariya*, 2, 7, 1.

its concentrated form assumes a figure. The figure is the figure of Sri Krishna. Krishna is not only Rasa or the object relished, but also the person, Who relishes. In other words He is both Rasa and Rasika. As Rasa He is the highest thing to be relished, as Rasika He is the greatest enjoyer of Rasa.

Rasa is transcendental (*aprakrita*) or phenomenal (*prakrita*). Phenomenal Rasa is not Rasa in the real sense. Rasa in the real sense has two distinctive qualities. Firstly, its relish is characterized by delicious astonishment. Astonishment is the essence of Rasa. Therefore Rasa is always wonderful (*adbhut*).³ Secondly, it is characterized by total absorption of the mind and the senses. The mind and the senses are so much absorbed in the astonishingly delicious experience of Rasa that they become completely unaware of all other things. Astonishment and absorption in phenomenal Rasa are momentary. Repeated enjoyment of phenomenal Rasa deprives it of all its charm. It becomes stale and causes neither astonishment nor absorption of the mind and the senses. But repeated experience of transcendental Rasa or Rasa pertaining to Krishna does not make it less astonishing or less absorbing, because Krishna is full of infinite variety (*ananta-vaichitripurna*), which makes Him eternally new. He is new every moment. He is full of infinite variety, both as Rasa to be enjoyed and as the enjoyer of Rasa. Therefore He is called

³ *Alankära kaustubha*, 6, 5, 7.

akhilarasamrita-murti or the embodiment of all kinds of Rasa.⁴

KRISHNA'S THREE DESIRES

Infinite variety in transcendental Rasa implies infinite desires in Krishna to realize new kinds of Rasa. Rasa in Krishna is, therefore dynamic. It is restless, effulgent, ever-flowing and ever growing, resulting in ever-growing desire on His part to perform new kinds of Lila and realize new levels of Rasa-consciousness.

Krishnadas Kaviraj says that Krishna's desire to enjoy the *Bhakti-rasa* of Radha is three-fold. He describes the three desires as follows.

THE FIRST DESIRE

Krishna's first desire is to know by experience the nature and sweetness of Radha's love or Bhakti for Him.

Radha's love is so powerful that it completely subjugates Krishna. He dances at Her will and cannot for a moment live without Her. Krishnadas Kaviraj says that He sits for hours on Her pathway to the Yamuna or on its bank so that He may be blessed by Her *darshan*.⁵ If She is angry with Him, He goes to

⁴ *sa esa rasänäm rasatamah, Chändogya, 1, 1, 3.*

⁵ Seeing. The term is used generally for an object of worship or veneration.

the extent of placing His head over Her feet to mollify Her, or praying with folded hands to Her Sakhis to help Him win Her favour. It is natural for Him to crave for the love or Bhakti of Radha, which maddens Him like this.

But Krishna's desire to relish the Bhakti of Radha is mysterious. It is mysterious, because Bhakti is the essence of His own Hladini Shakti, which He implants into the heart of a devotee, who desires to serve Him. How is it that Krishna craves for the enjoyment provided by His own Hladini Shakti, when placed in the heart of a devotee?⁶

Sri Jiva explains this with reference to the example of the flute and the flute-player. The flute-player is capable of producing a whistling sound, which is pleasing to the ear, by blowing air out of his mouth. But when he blows the same air into the flute and makes it pass through its different holes, it produces a melodious sound, which is more pleasing than the whistling sound produced without the aid of the flute. Similarly the Hladini Shakti has a relish of its own, which is sweet beyond description, when it resides in Sri Krishna, but its sweetness increases a thousandfold, when it is planted in the heart of the devotee. The devotees have a passionate desire to serve Krishna, according to their different *bhavs* (sentiments). The Hladini Shakti mixes with the different *bhavs* of the

⁶ *Pṛiti Samdarbha*, 65

devotees and their passionate desire to serve Krishna and acquires a variegation (*vaichitri*), which makes it so astonishingly sweet that even Krishna is charmed by it.⁷ Krishna's desire to relish the Bhakti of Radha is natural, because She is the highest devotee and the embodiment of all the different kinds of Rasa.

THE SECOND DESIRE

Krishna is sweet (*madhur*) beyond limit. He is sweetness (*madhurya*) personified. His sweetness manifests itself prominently in His beautiful form (*rupa*). His pastimes (*lila*), His flute (*venu*) and His *prem*. Each of these is perfect and wonderful and is manifested in that form only in Krishna and no other incarnation.⁸ One peculiarity of Krishna's sweetness, which makes it even more wonderful, is that though it is perfect in all respects and there is no possibility of its increasing further, yet it increases every moment. Every moment Krishna is more charming and beautiful than before. Every moment He is new.⁹

Krishna's sweetness charms not only the gods and goddesses, but Himself. Because He is eternally new, He cannot sometimes recognize Himself. Once he happened to see His reflection in a pillar studded with

⁷ *ibid*, 65

⁸ Cc. Ädi, 4. 138.

⁹ *ibid*, 141

gems. He stood aghast, looking at it for some time and thinking, "Who is this person, so charming and beautiful? I never saw such beauty before. I never even heard or imagined anything like it." As He bent His head to have a closer look at it, He saw that person doing the same. "Oh! This is My own reflection!" He said, "I never knew that I was so beautiful. Oh! How much I wish I could enjoy Myself, hug and kiss Myself. But how can I? I cannot hug My reflection. In order to enjoy Myself I have to be other than Myself. I am the *vishaya* or the object of enjoyment, not the *ashraya* or the person, who enjoys. I must become the *ashraya*, if I want to enjoy Myself, not the ordinary *ashraya*, such as any devotee is, but the Supreme, the Highest *ashraya*, the *ashraya* of all *ashrayas*, that is, Radharani Herself. For, though each devotee enjoys My sweetness, he enjoys it only in the measure that corresponds to his *prem*.¹⁰ My sweetness can be enjoyed only through the eyes of *prem*. The higher the *prem*, the higher the enjoyment. Radharani's *prem* is the highest and the most perfect. Therefore She alone enjoys My sweetness wholly and enjoys it eternally."¹¹

We have said that Krishna's sweetness is limitless and ever-growing. Is there not a contradiction involved in Krishna's sweetness being limitless and ever-growing

¹⁰ Cc. Ädi. 4. 143.

¹¹ *ei premä asväde nitya rädhikä ekali
ämära mädhuryämrita äsväde sakali*... Cc. Ädi. 4. 139

and Radha enjoying it wholly and eternally? Cannot the contradiction be resolved? It can be resolved. The solution lies in the nature of Krishna's sweetness and Radha's *prem* and the nature of relationship between the two.

Sweetness of Krishna is relative to the *prem* of the devotee. It is not something that exists wholly by itself. Just as sweetness of sugar is neither in the sugar, nor in the tongue, but in the union of the two, the sweetness of Krishna lies in the perception of Krishna by the devotee. It is only in the mirror of the heart of the devotee purified by *prem* that the sweetness of Krishna is reflected. The more the heart is purified by *prem*, the sweeter is the reflection.¹² To a man whose heart is impure Krishna does not appear to be so sweet, just as to the tongue of a man suffering from jaundice, sugar does not taste sweet. Radha's *prem* is the highest and in every respect perfect. Therefore the mirror of Her heart is the cleanest and the reflection of Krishna's sweetness in Her heart is perfect.

Though Radha's *prem* is perfect in all respects and infinite (*vibhu*) and there is no possibility of its increasing further, yet it increases every moment. This is wonderful and inconceivable, yet it is true.¹³

¹² Cc. Ädi, 4.143.

¹³ *rädhä prema vibhu jära bädite nähi thäi
tathäpi se ksane bädhaye sadäi* Cc. Ädi. 4.128

We have already said that love by its very nature is dissatisfied with itself. The more the love, the greater the dissatisfaction and the greater and the more passionate the longing for love. Radha's love is infinite, therefore Her longing (*utkantha*) for love is also infinite and ceaseless. It is the infinite and ceaseless longing for love that makes it grow ceaselessly.

Since Radha's love, though perfect in all respects, grows ever and ever more, the mirror of Her heart, though perfectly clean, grows ever and ever more in cleanliness and the reflection of Krishna's beauty in it though perfectly sweet grows ever and ever more in sweetness.

Krishna's sweetness is perfect, yet ever growing. Radha's love is perfect, yet ever-growing. Therefore there is no contradiction involved in Radha enjoying the sweetness of Krishna wholly and eternally.

It is therefore natural that Krishna should yearn to enjoy His sweetness wholly and eternally as Radha does. This is possible only if somehow He becomes Radha and loves Himself as Radha does.

THE THIRD DESIRE

Sri Krishna knows that His sweetness as experienced by Radha is unparalleled. Therefore He desires to enjoy His sweetness as experienced by Radha. He also knows that the *rasa* Radha experiences simultaneously with the enjoyment of His sweetness is unequalled. Although

He is Himself the embodiment of *rasa*, the *rasa* experienced by Him fades into insignificance before the *rasa* enjoyed by Radha.¹⁴

How is it that Radha's experience of *rasa* is superior to even that of Sri Krishna? One reason is that Krishna cannot enjoy His own ever new and ever-growing *madhurya*, which Radha enjoys wholly. The other reason is that Her love is the purest and the highest. The purer the love the higher the *rasa*.

It is not only Radha, Who enjoys higher *rasa* than Krishna, but all the *gopis* of Vraja. Krishna does not enjoy as much *rasa* on seeing the *gopi*, as the *gopi* enjoys on seeing Krishna. The *gopi's* enjoyment is a million times superior to that of Krishna.¹⁵

One of the most peculiar characteristics of *gopi-prem* is that though she desires only Krishna's happiness and does not have the least desire for her own happiness, happiness comes to her in abundance.¹⁶ We know that happiness of any particular kind is conditioned by the desire or liking for that kind of happiness. We get satisfaction from food only when we

¹⁴ Bharata Muni, the foremost *äcarya* of *rasa-sästra* says that in the state of union the Äsraya (lover) and the Vishaya (beloved) enjoy *rasa* equally. Krishnadäsa Kaviräja says that this is true about präkrita (mundane) *rasa*, not about *Vrajarastra*, in which the *rasa* enjoyed by Äsraya is superior to the *rasa* enjoyed by Visaya (Cc. Ädi, 4.2 199-201).

¹⁵ Cc. Ädi, 4. 187.

¹⁶ *ibid*, 186.

have hunger. But the *gopis* neither desire their happiness nor have any liking for it. They do not desire anything except the happiness of Krishna.¹⁷ For the sake of Krishna they sacrifice everything. When Krishna's flute calls them to the forest at the dead of night, they dart towards Him like an arrow, ignoring the norms of society, the injunctions of the Vedas, the commands of the elders, the fear and the impediment, caused by wild animals of the forest and the thorns and bushes that lie on the way. They do so not for their own pleasure, but for the service and happiness of Krishna. If in the service of Krishna they feel any pleasure, which is an obstacle to service, they curse it.¹⁸

The reason, why the *gopis* feel happiness even though they do not desire it, is that their love, which by its very nature seeks the happiness of Krishna, not its own, makes them identify their happiness with the happiness of Krishna.¹⁹ Their happiness is not independent of the happiness of Krishna.

The *gopis* dress beautifully and decorate themselves not for their own pleasure, but for the pleasure of Krishna. They desire pleasure from such activities, because they please Krishna. Even their amorous activities like kissing or hugging, which

¹⁷ ätma sukha-dukha gopi-ra nähika vihära/
Krishna sukha hetu cheshta manovyavahära // Cc. Ädi, 4.
174.

¹⁸ Cc., Ädi, 4.201.

¹⁹ ibid, 194.

appear to be full of *kama* (lust) outwardly, are nothing but the manifestation of *prem* and the desire to cause happiness to Krishna. *Kama* cannot touch them, because it is opposed to *prem*. *Kama* is darkness, *prem* is light.²⁰ *Kama* is the function (*vritti*) of Maya-shakti, *prem* the function of Svarupa-shakti. *Maya* cannot touch Svarupa-shakti, just as darkness cannot touch light.

Krishna always feels indebted to the *gopis* on account of their single-minded and selfless devotion to Him. He does not know how to clear their debt. There is nothing He can give them in return for their love and service, because they do not desire anything except the service of Krishna. If He gives them greater opportunity for service, the debt increases instead of diminishing.

He has promised that He will reciprocate the *bhav* of the devotee—*ye yatha mam prapadyante tamstathaiva bhajamyaham*.²¹ But He cannot fulfil His promise in the case of the *gopis*. If He could He would have cleared His debt. He cannot, because He is the sole *vishaya* or the object of devotion, while the devotees are many. He must satisfy each one of the devotees. His devotion towards any *gopi* cannot be as single-minded as her devotion towards Him. He, therefore, finds Himself in a predicament. In

²⁰ *ibid*, 171.

²¹ Gitā, 4.11.

utter helplessness He declares Himself insolvent by saying:

*"na paraye' ham nirvadyasamyujam
 svasadhukrityam vibudhayasapi vah /
 ya ma bhajan durjaragehasrinkhalah
 samvrishchya tad vah pratiyat sadhunah //*

—Bh., 10.32.22

—My dearest *gopis*! You have for My sake cut asunder all ties of home, etc., which even the yogis find it difficult to cut, and have come to Me. Your love for Me is so pure and selfless, that I find it impossible to return it. I shall always remain indebted to you. You can absolve Me from the debt only by your gentleness and love for Me.”

The declaration has been made in reference to the *gopis* in general, but it refers to Radha in a sense in which it does not refer to any other *gopi*. In case of the *gopis* Krishna tries to reciprocate their love howsoever imperfectly He can. Although He is the *vishaya* of love He assumes the role of *ashraya* and tries to love and serve them in the same manner in which they love and serve Him, that is, in accordance with their *bhav*, called *mahabhav*. But in respect of Radha He cannot do this, because Her *mahabhav* is different from the *mahabhav* of the *gopis*. It is *madanakhya mahabhav*, which is peculiar to Her alone. It can neither be reciprocated nor imitated. It is the acme of love, the highest point to which love can

reach. Therefore its *rasa* is also the highest. This *rasa* is beyond the reach of Krishna. His limitation, with regard to it is two-fold:

1. He is *vishaya*, not *ashraya*
2. He lacks in *madanakhya mahabhav*

The first of these He may try to overcome by superimposing the role of *ashraya* upon His basic Self as *vishaya*, but the second He cannot, unless He begs, borrows or steals the *madanakhya mahabhav* of Radha, which characterizes Her and no one else. But He is so infatuated by the unique *rasa*, which Radha enjoys, that there is no limit to which He cannot stoop down, if He only gets an opportunity to relish it. Therefore, as Rupa Gosvami says, in the language of the *rasikas*, *kutuki* (inquisitive and ingenious) Krishna steals it—“*kutuki rasastomam hritva.*”

He does not beg or borrow, because He is not so accustomed. He is accustomed to stealing, because He is Himself a *rasika* and the *rasa* He relishes in stealing, He cannot find in begging. He started stealing small things like butter and the clothes of the *gopis*. When He became thoroughly practiced in the art of stealing, He thought of stealing more valuable things. There was nothing more valuable than the *bhav* of Radha. He thought that the only way by which He could fulfill His three desires was by stealing the *bhav* of Radha and becoming one with Her, because She was nothing except Her *bhav*. So He stole the *bhav* of Radha and became one with Her. Since Radha's *gaura kanti* (golden lustre)

is a necessary adjunct of Her *bhav*, He became *gaura* (golden) from blue. Since Her *bhav* is the *bhav* of a Bhakta (devotee) He became a Bhakta from Bhagavan. He became Mahaprabhu Sri Krishna Chaitanya.

The *rasikas* think that one more reason why Krishna stole the *bhav* of Radha instead of begging or borrowing it from Her, was that He knew Radha would not oblige Him. Radha knew that His desire to enjoy Her *bhav* was like crying for the moon. He was not competent to hold or assimilate it and was bound to come to grief, if She granted His prayer. This is borne out by the strange and unheard of *sattvika bhavs* in the shape of convulsions of the body, from which He suffered during the last years of His life, when He was totally absorbed in enjoying the *bhav* of Radha in the seclusion of Gambhira, His favourite resort in Puri. His joints became loose and hands and feet sometimes lengthened, sometimes contracted and entered the body like the limbs of a tortoise. This indicated that He could not assimilate or absorb in His system the *bhav* of Radha and His effort to enjoy Radha's *bhav*, even after stealing it, came to naught. Also, if by stealing Her *bhav*, He wanted to return Her love by loving Her in the manner in which She loved Him, He could not, and therefore remained Her debtor for ever.

THE DIVINITY OF SRI CHAITANYA

"Was Sri Chaitanya really Sri Krishna?" one might ask. The Shastras are full of statements about His

divinity to which he can refer.²² We need not reproduce them here. We need not also make any attempt to prove the divinity of Sri Chaitanya, because it is so evident. As the reader proceeds on with this biography, he will be convinced that He was no other than Sri Krishna.

No one can deny that Sri Chaitanya was at least a Mahapurusha or an ideal devotee. A Mahapurusha does not lie or pretend. Sri Chaitanya did not lie when He said to Srivasa one day, 'I am the Vishnu Whom you worship.' He not only said this but sat on the altar of Vishnu²³ in the form of Vishnu and asked Srivasa to worship Him. He did not lie when on another occasion He said to the devotees assembled at the house of Srivasa, "Know this body of Mine to be Bhagavan (*sachchidananda uttamam*)" and was worshipped as such by Srivasa, Nityanand, Gadadhar and the other devotees.²⁴

No *pramna* (proof) is better than *pratyaksa-pramna* (proof by direct perception.) Sri Chaitanya did not only say that He was Bhagavan, but gave *darshan* to the devotees in the particular forms of Bhagavan they worshipped. He gave *darshan* to Srivasa as Vishnu,²⁵ to Murari as Baraha

²² A detailed description of the Pramnaäs or proofs for the divinity of Sri Chaitanya can be found in *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Ki Bhagavattä*, published by Sri Krishna-Janmasthan, Mathura.

²³ *Kadachä* 2, 9, 18; *Mahäkävya*.

²⁴ *Kadachä* 2, 12, 12-17.

²⁵ C. Bh., 2, 2, 260-266.

Bhagavan,²⁶ to Sridhar,²⁷ Shachi,²⁸ and several other devotees²⁹ assembled at the house of Srivasa, as Krishna, to Murari as Ram,³⁰ to Srivasa as Nrisinha,³¹ to Nityanand as Shadabhuja,³² to Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya³³ and Kashi Mishra³⁴ as Chaturbhujas.³⁵

Images of Sri Chaitanya as Bhagavan were installed and worshipped during his life time. The famous Image of Sri Chaitanya in Nadiya was worshipped by his wife Vishnupriya. His Image at Katava was made and worshipped by his associate Gadadhar.³⁶ Narahari Sarkara Thakur installed a Sri Murti of Sri Chaitanya in Sri Khanda.³⁷ Murari Gupt also worshipped the Images of Gaur-Nitai. These are at present worshipped in Vrindavan. The name of Murari Gupt is engraved on Their pedestal. Sri Chaitanya himself gave his Image called Gaur-Govind to KashIshvar to be worshipped by him in Vrindavan.³⁸ This Image is now worshipped in Govind Ji's temple

²⁶ C. C., 1, 17, 17; *Mahäkävyä*, 5, 15, 18.

²⁷ C. Bh. 2, 8, 188-194.

²⁸ *ibid*, 2, 8, 63-66.

²⁹ *Kadachä*, 2, 10, 14.

³⁰ C. Bh., 2, 10.

³¹ *Kadachä*, 2, 11, 3; C.C., 1, 17, 84-89.

³² *Kadachä*, 2-8, 7.

³³ *Mahäkävyä*, 12, 31.

³⁴ C.C., 2, 10, 29-31.

³⁵ Bh. R., p. 556.

³⁶ Bh. R., p.555.

³⁷ *ibid*, p. 91.

in Jaipur. The Images of Gaur-Nitai in Kalana were also given by Gaur-Nitai themselves to Gauridas Pandit.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is Bhagavan Krishna. But He assumed the *bhav* of a *bhakta*, because He wanted to relish Bhakti and preach it by precept as well as by example. Therefore He lived and behaved as a Bhakta. His *bhakti-bhav* was not feigned, but real. It made Him so humble that, if anyone behaved towards Him, considering that He was Bhagavan, He felt very much aggrieved and wanted to commit suicide. But His divinity or Bhagavat-*bhav* sometime burst out, as it were, throwing away altogether the mantle of the Bhakta, out of mercy for His devotees. Then He blessed them with His *darshan* as Bhagavan and accepted their Puja (worship). This made His personality complex and difficult to understand. Even the devotees like Advaitcharya were sometimes baffled.

The dual role of Sri Chaitanya presents a special difficulty to the writer of His biography in English. Since He presents Himself sometimes as Bhagavan, sometimes as Bhakta, it becomes necessary to begin the pronoun, used for Him, sometimes with a capital letter, sometimes with small, as the present author has done. But sometimes it becomes difficult to understand His *bhav* and to decide whether a capital letter should be used or small. In such cases this author has exercised his discretion, expecting the reader to be indulgent, if he thinks that the discretion has not been correctly used.

CHAPTER II

MATERIALS FOR THE BIOGRAPHY OF SRI CHAITANYA

There is no dearth of materials for the biography of Sri Chaitanya. Sri B. B. Majumadar, the author of *Sri Chaitanya-chariter-upadana*, the most famous work of modern scholarship relating to the materials for the biography of Sri Chaitanya, tells us that fifty-eight of Sri Chaitanya's associates were more or less famous as poets.¹ Their lyrics are full of references to numerous aspects of Chaitanya-lila, of which they were eye-witnesses. But of greater historical importance are the many biographies of Sri Chaitanya, written by his followers. We shall here give a brief account of some of the more important of them and examine their authenticity.

THE KADACHA OF MURARI GUPTA

The earliest biography of Sri Chaitanya is the *Chaitanya-Charitamrita* of Murari Gupt, one of the

¹ C. C. U., p. 70.

closest associates of Sri Chaitanya. It was compiled within 10 years of the disappearance of Sri Chaitanya. It is known as Kadacha or notes. It is written in Sanskrit and consists of four sections, divided into seventy-eight cantos. The historical importance of this biography is apparent from the fact of Murari's close association with Sri Chaitanya during the whole of his Navadvip-lila, so close that some of the incidents during this period of the life of Sri Chaitanya relate to him. How close was Murari's association with Sri Chaitanya can be known from the following incident, mentioned by him in the Kadacha.

Murari once went to Puri with Advaitcharya and the other devotees. He went to Narendra Sarovara and sat there. He said to Advaitcharya, "I have by your mercy come so far. I do not have the strength to go further. I also do not have the courage to go and have the *darshan* of Jagannath, because I am so low. You may go and tell Mahaprabhu about me. I shall go later, if I have the strength." He said this and sat quietly near Narendra Sarovara.² Advaitcharya and others went to Jagannath's temple, then to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. As soon as Mahaprabhu saw them, he inquired, "Where is Murari?" They went back to Narendra Sarovara and told Murari about Mahaprabhu's enquiry. *Murari* brought tears in his eyes. He went to Mahaprabhu and, overwhelmed with love and gratitude, kept looking at him for a long time without saying a

² *Kadaeha* 14, 77- 84.

word. Mahaprabhu embraced him and bathed him with the tears of his eyes.³

Sri Chaitanya had instructed the devotees that when they visited Puri they must first have the *darshan* of Jagannath and then go to him. But Murari, inspite of his instruction, first had the *darshan* of Mahaprabhu, then of Jagannath. This discloses another aspect of his close relationship with Mahaprabhu. He was a devotee of Ram and he regarded Mahaprabhu as identical with Ram.⁴ Dr. B. Majumadar says that Shivananda Sen, Narahari and Murari were the three persons, who first promulgated the doctrine of *Gaur-paramyavada*, according to which Gaur or Mahaprabhu was not the incarnation of Krishna, but Krishna Himself.⁵

Some writers have doubted the authenticity of Murari Gupt's Kadacha on the ground that, though Kavikarnapura in his Chaitanya-charitamrita Mahakavya, according to his own admission, faithfully follows Murari in the description of Mahaprabhu's Navadvip-lila,⁶ his dependence on the Kadacha is negligible in his description of Nilacala-lila. Their doubt on this ground is not justified, because, as Dr. Majumadara says, it was natural for him to depend for Nilacala-lila more on his father and sources like Srivas, Vasudev Dutta and others, who had seen the

³ ibid, 103, 112.

⁴ C. C., 2, 11, 37.

⁵ C. C. U., p. 67.

⁶ ibid, p. 75.

Nilacala-lila and lived not very far from Srikhanda, where he lived with his father.⁷

WORKS OF KAVIKARNAPURA

Kavikarnapura was the son of Shivananda Sen, the well-known associate of Sri Chaitanya. His name was Paramananda. He was born with the blessings of Mahaprabhu.⁸ It was therefore, natural that he should have been a child of extraordinary merit. When he was only seven years old he was once taken to Puri by his father and laid at the feet of Mahaprabhu. When asked by Mahaprabhu to say something, he recited a *shlok* composed by him, which it was impossible for a child of his age to compose. Mahaprabhu was pleased and gave him the name Kavikarnapura (the ear ornament of poets). His three works are of considerable importance as materials for the life of Mahaprabhu. They are: *Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita Mahakavya*, *Sri Chaitanya-chandrodaya* and *Gauraganoddeshadipika*.

Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita Mahakavya was written in 1542, when Kavikarnapura was about sixteen years old. It consists of twenty cantos and one thousand nine hundred and eleven *shlokas* and gives a complete account of the life of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.⁹ It has been fully utilized by subsequent biographers.

⁷ ibid, p. 75.

⁸ C. C., 3, 12, 45 - 47.

⁹ C. C., 3, 16, 60 - 70.

Sri *Chaitanya-chandradoya* is a ten act drama. It is said in its preface that it was written to assuage the grief of Maharaja Prataparudra after the disappearance of Sri Chaitanya. Therefore it must have been written sometime after the disappearance of Sri Chaitanya and before the death of Maharaja Prataparudra in 1540. The historical importance of the drama is apparent from the fact that fourteen of its Shloks have been quoted by Sri Krishnadas Kaviraj in *Chaitanya-charitamrita*.

SRI CHAITANYA-CHANDRAMRITA

Sri Chaitanya-Chandramrita was written by Prabodhananda Sarasvati probably within five years of the disappearance of Mahaprabhu.¹⁰ It is unparalleled in its description of the personality of Mahaprabhu—his beauty, *bhav*, dance, *kirtan*, *sattvika-bhavs* and style of preaching.¹¹ He says that people were set firmly on the path of Bhakti by seeing him, by being touched by him, by making obeisance to him, or merely by thinking of him.

It is strange that Sri Krishnadas Kaviraj makes neither any mention of him, nor quotes any Shlok from *Chaitanya-chandramrita*. B.B. Majumadar suggests that this may have been due to the fact that he was a worshipper of Gaur-nagar, or the Nimai of Navadvip.

¹⁰ C. C. U., p. 171.

¹¹ C. C. P., 10, 14, 16, 38, 69.

while Krishnadas Kaviraj and the Vrindavan Gosvamis worshipped Sri Chaitanya—the Sannyasi of Nilachal.¹²

Prabodhanand was the uncle of Gopal Bhatt Gosvami. In *Haribhakti-vilasa* Gopal Bhatt glorifies him as his guru. Manohara Das, however, writes in his *Anuragavalli* that Prabodhananda was Gopal Bhatt's Shiksa Guru, not Diksa Guru.¹³

SRI CHAITANYA BHAGAVATA

Sri Chaitanya Bhagavat, the most authoritative work on the life of Sri Chaitanya, was written by Vrindavan Das at the command of Sri Nityanand. Its date is uncertain. According to Dr. B. B. Majumadar it was written in 1548.¹⁴ It consists of 52 chapters, divided into three *khandas* or parts. It is the first biography of Sri Chaitanya, written in Bengali, and is regarded as a landmark in the history of Bengali literature.

Krishnadas Kaviraj pays high tribute to Thakur Vrindavan Das for his masterly exposition of the life and teachings of Sri Chaitanya and, recognizing his absolute authority in the matter, calls him "Sage Vyasa of the Lila of Sri Chaitanya."¹⁵ Thakur Vrindavan Das derives his authority from first-hand sources like: (1) Nityanand, (2) his mother, Narayani, (3) the Kadacha

¹² C. C. U., p. 174.

¹³ *Anuragavalli*, p. 4.

¹⁴ C. C. U., p. 192.

¹⁵ C. C., 1, 11, 52.

of Murari Gupt, (4) the six Gosvami's of Vrindavan, (5) Advaitcharya and (6) Gadadhar Pandit.

Nityanand was the most beloved companion of Sri Chaitanya. He was so closely associated with him that in the Sampradaya of Sri Chaitanya homage to him is regarded as a necessary condition of winning the favour of Sri Chaitanya. Vrindavan Das had the fortune of sitting at his feet and hearing directly from him about the life and teachings of Sri Chaitanya. The supreme authority of Chaitanya Bhagavat is mainly due to the fact of its author's deriving most of the material for it from this most reliable source.¹⁶ The author also derived some material from his mother Narayani, who was the niece of Srivasa Pandit and was living at the time, when Sri Chaitanya performed *Sankirtan* with his party in the historic courtyard of her uncle. She was a special favourite of Sri Chaitanya even when she was a child four years old. At that time, once in the courtyard of Srivasa he gave her as his *prasad* a betel chewed by him. Vrindavan Das says that immediately she was blessed with Krishna-*prem*. She began to cry, 'Ha Krishna!' and weep and became unconscious.¹⁷ The Kadacha of Murari Gupt was also made use of by Vrindavan Das.

On completion the work was sent to the six Gosvami's of Vrindavan for their approval. They examined it closely and were so much satisfied that

¹⁶ C. Bh., 2, 20, 153, 309.

¹⁷ C. Bh., 2, 2, 170.

they changed its original name *Chaitanya-mangala* and gave it the name it now bears, in order to publicize the view that it had the same authority regarding the life and teachings of Sri Chaitanya as Srimad Bhagavat had regarding the divine Lila of Sri Krishna. This fact by itself is of supreme importance in adding to the value of the work. While the above are, thus, the main sources of the work Vrindavan Das also derived some material from persons like Advaitcharya¹⁸ and Gadadhar Pandit.¹⁹

SRI CHAITANYA CHARITAMRITA

Chaitanya Bhagavat describes the earlier part of the life of Sri Chaitanya in greater detail and deals somewhat summarily with the later, probably because Vrindavan Das finds that the work has already grown big, or because he is carried away by the desire to give a detailed description of the activities of his master Nityanand, which keeps him largely occupied towards the end. This deficiency was made up by Krishnadas Kaviraj, who wrote *Chaitanya Charitamrita* partly with a view to supplement the work of Thakur Vrindavan Das.²⁰ In a historical account of the life of Sri Chaitanya, therefore, the two works cannot be isolated from each other.

¹⁸ C. Bh., 2, 24, 68.

¹⁹ ibid, 3, 11, 84.

²⁰ C. C., 3, 20, 73-78.

From what has been said above it is clear that the writing of *Chaitanya-charitamrita* was taken up by Krishnadas Kaviraj sometime after *Chaitanya Bhagavat* was written; But a misunderstanding seems to prevail regarding the exact date of its completion. Most writers like Dr. D. C. Sen assign it to 1582 A. D., relying at the note that appears at the end of some of the manuscripts. But this, as Paramahamsa Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami points out in his preface to the Gaudiya Math edition of *Chaitanya-charitamrita*, is apparently the note of the copyist. Chaitanya Charitamrita quotes from some works like the Gopal-Champu, which were written after 1582 A. D. If the authority of Dr. Sen himself is accepted, Gopal-campu was written some time after the year 1599. *Chaitanya-charitamrita*, therefore, could not have been written earlier than 1601. The author says he wrote it at an extreme old age, when he was weak and infirm and could neither walk nor move.²¹ He was according to our estimate born about the year 1531 and, if he wrote it, when he was 80 years old, it must have been completed about the year 1611. According to Dr. Sen, however, he was born in the year 1496. If this be correct, he must have been about thirty-eight years old, when he went to Vrindavan, where the six Gosvamis, Including Raghunath Das Gosvami, had settled, after the passing away of Sri Chaitanya. But Dr. Sen writes

²⁰ C. C., 3, 20, 84-86.

²¹ *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 478.

elsewhere that he was at that time merely a lad, whom the Vrindavan Gosvamis had to give proper education and spiritual training.²² Moreover, if Krishnadas was actually born in the year 1496, he would have been a contemporary of Sri Chaitanya for thirty-eight years and should have, in that case, at least given an indication of this somewhere in his writings.

Krishnadas Kaviraj was born of poor parents and was orphaned when he was only six years old. At the early age of sixteen he decided to lead a saintly life. Just at that time, according to his own accounts, Nityanand appeared to him in a dream and commanded him to go to Vrindavan.²³ When he came to Vrindavan, the six Gosvamis were highly impressed by his purity of heart and sincerity of purpose. They readily admitted him into their disciplic order. They initiated him into the spirit of the teachings of Sri Chaitanya and helped him in his spiritual career in every way possible.²⁴ Each of the Gosvamis bequeathed to him his own treasure of spiritual knowledge received from Sri Chaitanya, so that, when in his old age he was requested by the Vaishnav devotees of Vrindavan to write a more exhaustive biography of Sri Chaitanya than that of Thakur Vrindavan Das, he already possessed a fund of first-hand information regarding the life and teachings of Sri Chaitanya, derived from the most

²² C. C., 1, 5, 177-187.

²⁴ C. C., 1, 5, 177- 182.

authentic sources. He was specially favoured in this respect by Raghunath Das Gosvami, who had been a close associate of Sri Chaitanya at Puri during the last sixteen years of his life and possessed some intimate knowledge of his *lila* and the teachings imparted by him during that period. Raghunath Das and Svarupa Damodar were the only two biographers (Kadacha Karatas) of Sri Chaitanya, who lived so close to him.²⁵ All other contemporary biographers stayed far away and could not note the details of his life so accurately. Svarupa took notes in brief, Raghunath Das in a more amplified form.²⁶ Krishnadas often repeats that his biography is nothing but a still more amplified form of the Kadacha of Raghunath Das.²⁷ He had the privilege of hearing the Kadacha read and explained by the author himself, as he lived with him at Radhakund, while he was compiling *Chaitanya-charitamrita*.

Svarupa Damodar's Kadacha was also made available to Krishnadas by Raghunath Das. The importance of Svarupa Damodar's Kadacha is due to the fact that it was written by one, whose association with Sri Chaitanya was the closest and the longest. Svarup Damodar or Purushottam Acharya, which was his name before he took Sannyas, hailed from Navadvip. He had, therefore, direct knowledge of Sri

²⁵ ibid, 3, 14, 6-7.

²⁶ ibid, 10-11.

²⁷ ibid, 2, 2, 73.

Chaitanya's life and activities before he took Sannyas. Immediately after Sri Chaitanya's initiation into Sannyas he also took Sannyas and went to Puri, where he stayed with him from the time of his return from the South to the end. He was not with him only during his journey from Bengal to Puri, from Puri to the South, and from Puri to the West. But he was able to gather the information about this period from Mukund Dutta, Sarvabhaum Bhattcharya, Raya Ramnanda and Balabhadra Bhattcharya, besides Sri Chaitanya himself.

Besides the information, which Krishnadas obtained from Raghunath Das and the other Gosvamis, he also had the advantage of consulting the *Chaitanya Bhagavat* and the works of Kavikarnapura. It is for these reasons that *Chaitanya-Charitamrita* is regarded as the most authoritative work on Sri Chaitanya.

What further adds to the importance of the work is its philosophical presentation. The author exhibits thorough knowledge of Indian philosophy in all its branches and gives an elaborate exposition of the doctrine of Sri Chaitanya, quoting profusely from a huge list of Sanskrit and Bengali works. This makes the work difficult to understand by readers, who are not fully acquainted with the six systems of Indian philosophy. The language of the work also is by no means easy. It is a strange mixture of Hindi, Sanskrit and Bengali. In length it exceeds even the *Chaitanya Bhagavat* and runs into as many as 15,050 Shloks. Like the *Chaitanya Bhagavat* it is also divided into

three Khandas, the Adi, the Madhya and the Antya. But inspite of its language and size, it is regarded as a work of rare merit, which has no parallel in the whole of Bengali literature.²⁸ In point of sanctity it is given the same place as the *Bhagavat* and is read with reverence in the meetings of Vaishnavs. The fact that it quotes as many as 380 times from *Srimad Bhagavat*, with which, according to Sri Chaitanya himself, his views are identical, shows how it breathes the essential spirit of his philosophy from beginning to end.

SRI CHAITANYA MANGAL

Sri Chaitanya Mangal was written by Lochan Das, a disciple of Narahari Sarakara of Srikhanda, who was a companion of Sri Chaitanya. The work is divided into four parts—Sutra, Adi, Madhya and Shesha. It is based primarily on Murari Gupt's Kadacha, but it adds some information which he derives perhaps from Narahari Sarakara. Its exact date is not known, but it must have been compiled some time after *Chaitanya Bhagavat* and before *Chaitanya Charitamrita*, because it mentions the former but does not mention the latter. Its lyrical value is immense. Its deep devotional attitude recommends itself to be sung by devout Vaishnavs. Its historical value may not be much. But it gives

²⁸ Dr. D. C. Sen: *The Vaiñeava Literature of Medieval Bengal*, p. 62.

some new information, which we have no reason to disbelieve.²⁹

It is from Chaitanya Mangal alone that we know that Nityanand's name before his Sannyas was Kuber.³⁰ Both *Chaitanya Bhagavat* and *Chaitanya Charitamrita* being silent about the time and manner of Sri Chaitanya's disappearance, it is from *Chaitanya Mangal* alone that we learn that he merged in Jagannath on the seventh day of the month of Ashadha.³¹

Some writers try to prove that in certain respects Lochan Das deviates from the path of pure Bhakti, which does not seem to be true.³² There is no doubt that Lochan subscribed to the doctrine of Gaur-paramyavada, of his master Narahari Sarakara, which was not subscribed by the Gosvamis of Vrindavan. According to Gaur-paramyavada, Gaur or Sri Chaitanya is Himself the end and not merely a means to the attainment of Radha-Krishna, as the Vrindavan Gosvamis believe. This difference in *bhav* towards Sri Chaitanya need not be taken to mean that Lochan Das deviates from the path of pure Bhakti followed by the Gosvamis of Vrindavan.

²⁹ C. C. U., p. 276.

³⁰ C. M., p. 33.

³¹ ibid, p. 116 - 117.

³² See introduction to the second edition of *Chaitanya Mangal*, published by the Bagh Bazar Gaudiyä Math, Calcutta.

JAYANAND'S CHAITANYA-MANGAL

Jayananda was a disciple of Gadadhar Pandita. He is said to have written *Chaitanya-mangal* at his insistence. The work is divided into nine parts— Adi, Nadiya, Vairagya, Sannyas, Utkala-tirtha, Prakasha, Vijaya and Uttara-khanda. Though it provides new information, it is not regarded as authoritative, because of the many mistakes committed by it.³³

GOVIND DASA'S KADACHA

Regarding the Kadacha of Govind Das it has been suggested that during his tour of the South, Sri Chaitanya had with him a servant named Govind Das, who wrote an account of his tour. This has been strongly supported by Dr. D. C. Sen, but strongly disputed by Sri Mrnalakanti Ghosh. We shall not enter into the dispute. On our part we shall say that the authenticity of the work will remain doubtful until the dispute is resolved and we shall refrain from using it for our present purpose.

We shall draw material for the biography of Sri Chaitanya only from sources of which the authenticity is undisputed, namely *Chaitanya-Bhagavat*, *Chaitanya charitamrita*, Murari Gupt's Kadacha and Kavikarnapura's *Chaitanya-charitamrita Mahakavya* and *Chaitanya-chandrodaya*.

³³ C. C. U. P. 225 - 230.

CHAPTER III

THE ADVENT

CONDITION OF BENGAL BEFORE THE ADVENT OF SRI CHAITANYA

Before the advent of Sri Chaitanya the political condition of India was deplorable. The country had been subjected to the bigotry, tyranny and loot of Muslim invaders. Mahamud Gaznavi had in his seventeenth invasion (1017 A. D.) demolished many temples and carried away with him so many idols made of gold and silver and so much jewelry that 100 camels were required to carry them.¹ Among the temples he demolished was the famous temple at the birthplace of Sri Krishna in Mathura. The temple was so gigantic and beautiful that according to Mahamud himself it could not have been completed in less than 200 years and must have cost at least 100 million dinars (gold mohurs).² From the beginning of the eleventh century to the close of the sixteenth century, the demolition of

¹ Growse: *A District Memoir of Mathura*, 3rd Ed. P. 33.

² ibid, p. 34.

Vraja by the Muslims continued unabated. Till the close of the sixteenth century Vraja-mandala, the highest place of pilgrimage of Hindus and the centre of their religion and culture, which was described by the Greek writers as the land of gods, was reduced to a forest, infested by wild animals, and was used as hunting ground by the Muslim rulers.

At the time of the appearance of Sri Chaitanya Sikandar Lodi (1488-1516) ruled in Delhi. He demolished all the temples in Mathura and the idols were given away to butchers to be used as weights for weighing meat.³ Hindu mode of worship was prohibited. They were not allowed to shave and were compelled to grow beard.⁴

At this time the condition of Bengal also was no better. Till the appearance of Sri Chaitanya in 1486 Bengal was ruled by the kings of Iliyas dynasty. During their reign there were constant political disturbances. Revolts, conspiracies, fanaticism, loot, murder and debauchery were rampant. After a period of anarchy authority was restored, when Ala-uddin Hussain Shah, who has been acknowledged as the greatest Sultan of Bengal, came into power (1493-1519). Though he followed a liberal policy towards his Hindu subjects, at least so far as appointments on senior positions were concerned, he continued to persecute Hindus and demolish Hindu temples and images. From the

³ ibid.

⁴ ibid.

beginning of his reign Husain Shah got involved in protracted war with Orissa. In 1509 he attacked Orissa, when Maharaja Prataparudra, the ruler of Orissa, was away in the South with his army. He captured Puri and destroyed almost all the idols in Puri.

Inspite, however, of the most unsatisfactory condition of Bengal, and persecution of Hindus by Muslims, the Hindus of Bengal were at this time financially prosperous and educationally very much advanced. Vrindavan Das Thakur, the author of *Chaitanya Bhagavat*, says they were so wealthy that they did not know what to do with their wealth. They vied with one another in spending freely on the marriages of their children, dolls, dogs and cats.⁵ But they lived in fear of their wealth being taken away any moment, either by the king or by dacoits.

Educationally, Bengal, specially Navadvip, was the Oxford of India. From every corner of the country students came here to complete their education. No one was regarded as pandit, if he had not studied here. Here lived the greatest pandits of different branches of learning. Gangadasa, the biggest grammarian, Gadadhar Pandit, Murari Gupt and Raghunath, the biggest logicians, Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya, the biggest Vedantika, Raghunath, the biggest Smarta and Krishnananda, the biggest pandit of Tantra-shastra, all lived here. There were *tols* (schools) in every lane of Navadvip. Education was the love of the people as

⁵ C. Bh., 1, 2, 62, 65 - 66.

well as their pastime. Groups of students were seen at various places enjoying discussion on academic subjects. Even the women on bathing-ghats talked of the Shastras. But Bhakti, the highest fruit of education, was found lacking everywhere.

In the name of Bhakti or religion they only passed nights in the worship of Yaksa⁶ with offerings of all kinds, including wine and meat, or singing songs of goddess Mangalachandi.⁷ Brahmins, Ksatriyas and Vaishyas were all Shaktas. They ridiculed the Vaishnavs. They said, "Everyone, whether religious or irreligious must die. Therefore wisdom lies in dying after enjoying whatever the world offers for enjoyment. Fortune in this world smiles only on persons, who are wealthy, who ride palanquin or horses, and are surrounded by servants and psychophants." For them Bhakti had neither any attraction nor meaning.

They regarded *kirtan* as the cause of famine, floods and other calamities. The loud chanting of Harinam, they thought, disturbed the peace of Bhagavan and He sent them calamities by way of punishment. When they found *kirtan* being performed in any house, they conspired with one another to burn the house and send the people performing *kirtan* out of Navadvip.⁸

⁶ A demigod, superintending wealth.

⁷ C. Bh., 1, 2, 64.

⁸ C. Bh., 1, 2, 111 - 114.

THE INVOCATION

There were a small number of Vaishnavs in Navadvip. Life had become difficult for them. They prayed to the Lord incessantly to make it possible for them to sing His name and dance freely and fearlessly.

There lived in Navadvip the great *vaishnava* Acharya, called Advaitacharya. He was the natural leader of the *vaishnavas*, because he was well versed in all the Shastras and his Bhakti was unparalleled.⁹ He described Bhakti as the essence of all the Shastras and Krishna as the Supreme God. He felt pained at heart to see the people worshipping other gods and goddesses and ridiculing and torturing the *vaishnavas*. He worshipped Krishna day and night and occasionally roared like a lion to invoke Krishna, so that He might incarnate to protect the *vaishnavas* and revive Bhakti.¹⁰ In his passion to invoke Krishna, he once said to Srinivasa, Shuklambara, Gangadasa and the other devotees, who requested him to do something to relieve their suffering, "Listen, I promise that I shall make Krishna appear. You will see Him with your eyes. He will come and preach Bhakti, taking you all along with Him. If I am not able to do so, I promise that I shall make four arms appear from my body with Chakra (discus) and other weapons and slay the enemies. Yes, I can do that, because Krishna and His Shakti are mine

⁹ ibid, 1, 2, 78 -80.

¹⁰ C. Bh., 1, 2, 81 - 83: 90 - 91.

and I am Krishna's."¹¹ No wonder if Advaitcharya said this, because though he appeared as a devotee, he was substantially non-different from Krishna. Krishna Das Kaviraj describes him as the incarnation of Mahavishnu.¹²

Thus he assured the *vaishnavas* and always invoked Krishna, roaring like a lion. He said, "My name is 'Advait Sinha,' Advait, the lion. I shall prove that I am truly 'Advait Sinha' by making my Lord come down from Vaikunth at my call."

THE ADVENT

The call was heard and the Lord came down in the form of Sri Krishna Chaitanya. Sri Chaitanya Himself said on several occasions that He came at the call of Advait.¹³

But before the Lord came, He sent His Parikaras (divine associates), including Brahma, Shiva and Ananta Deva, in the guise of devotees.¹⁴ They were born at different places, but they all came to Navadvip, where Sri Chaitanya was to appear.¹⁵ Srivasa Pandit, Sri Ram Pandit, Sri Chandrashekhar, and Murari were born in Srihatta, the ancestral home of Sri Chaitanya.

¹¹ C. Bh., 1, 2, 118 - 122.

¹² C. C., 1, 6, 3 - 4.

¹³ C. Bh., 1, 2, 95.

¹⁴ ibid, 1, 2, 27 - 30.

¹⁵ ibid, 1, 2, 32.

Pundarik Vidyanidhi and Vasudev were born in Chattagram, Haridas in Budhana and Nityanand in Ekachakra in Radhagrama.¹⁶ With the appearance of Nityanand Prabhu, the incarnation of Balaram, the elder brother of Sri Krishna, the stage was completely set for the appearance of Sri Krishna Chaitanya.

There lived in Navadvip Jagannath Mishra and his wife Shachi. Jagannath was the fifth son of Upendra Mishra, who lived in Srihatta (East Bengal). He went to Navadvip for studies and settled there. He was the classmate of the father of Vasudev Sarvabhaum, the great Vedantika. He was a great Pandit. His title was 'Purandara'. Shachi was also born in Srihatta. She was the daughter of Nilambara Chakravarti, a famous astrologer, who had also come from Srihatta and settled in Navadvip.

Shachi was extremely beautiful. Jagannath was a devout *vaishnava*. In qualities of head and heart he was like Nand and Vasudev.¹⁷ Shachi was the very image of Vishnu-bhakti.¹⁸ Shachi gave birth to eight daughters, but not one of them survived. Then a son was born to her. He was called Vishvarup. When Vishvarup was eight or ten years old Jagannath had a vision. He saw that a divine light first entered his heart, then the heart of Shachi.¹⁹ The same day Shachi had a

¹⁶ ibid, 1, 2, 34 - 38.

¹⁷ C. C., 1, 13, 57.

¹⁸ C. Bh., 1, 2, 139.

¹⁹ C. C., 1, 13, 84 - 85.

dream. She saw gods and goddesses singing hymns, as if to someone in her womb.²⁰ This was natural, because the Lord now sat in her womb in the form of a child. But thirteen months passed and the child would not come out. This gave rise to anxiety. Jagannath consulted Nilambara Chakravarti. Nilambara Chakravarti said, "The child has been waiting for a preeminently auspicious occasion to appear. He will appear during this month." So the child appeared in the evening of the full moon day of Phalguna 1407 of the Shaka era (18th February 1486).²¹

The child was big in size, healthy and exquisitely beautiful. The colour of his skin was like molten gold. No one had ever seen or imagined a child like him. There was a lunar eclipse in Nadiya immediately after his appearance. The poets say that the moon in heaven hid itself in shame to see the beauty of the moon of Goloka that appeared on earth. But the child started weeping as soon as he appeared. He would weep and weep and nothing would make him stop weeping. Ladies from the neighborhood, who had come to see him, tried by all possible means to make him stop weeping, but failed. One of them exclaimed in utter helplessness, "O Hari! The child does not stop weeping." As soon as the child heard the name 'Hari', he stopped weeping and a sweet smile appeared on

²⁰ ibid, 82 - 83.

²¹ C. C., 1, 13, 89.

²² Sunderänanda Vidyävinode: Sri *Chaitanya Deva*, p. 53.

his face. The ladies understood that he loved to hear the name 'Hari'. So they started chanting '*Hari bol, Hari bol!*'²³ Throughout the chanting the child was all attention and a smile played on his lips. Whenever he cried the ladies sang Hari-nama and danced. He seemed to enjoy the *kirtan*.

Since the eclipse took place immediately after the appearance of the child, crowds of people started going to the Ganga, performing *kirtan* at that time, as usual on such occasions. Even gods celebrated the occasion, not so much on account of the eclipse, as on account of the appearance of the Lord. Brahma, Shiva and Ananta came in the guise of ordinary pilgrims. They prostrated themselves in obeisance to the Lord in the courtyard of Shachi and started dancing and chanting 'Hari, Hari.' No one could see them in the darkness caused by the eclipse.²⁴ There was *kirtan* inside the house of Jagannath Mishra and outside. The whole of Nadiya was filled with the sound of *kirtan*, as if to announce the arrival of the Lord to preach *Sankirtan* as the *dharma* (religion) of the age of Kali.²⁵

The child was called 'Nimai', because he was born in a room under the Neem tree in the house of Jagannath Mishra. He began to be called Gaur-hari by the ladies, because he loved to hear the name of Hari

²³ C. C., 1, 14, 19.

²⁴ C. Bh., 1, 2, 224 - 226.

²⁵ ibid, 179, 197, 214.

and his colour was *gaur* like molten gold.²⁶ Nilambara, on examining his horoscope, later called him Vishvambhar, because he said he was no other than Narayana.²⁷ He also said that he would be a Maharaja.²⁸ He meant that he would govern not territories but the hearts of men.

This was evident, because no one, who took him in his or her lap, wanted to leave him. His features were extraordinarily attractive. The contour of his body was perfect. His cheeks were ruddy and lips were bright like a Bimba fruit. His eyes were slightly tinged with red and were long like a lotus petal. His glances, his smile, his golden skin and the movement of his tender hands and feet were all so charming that he easily won the hearts of people, who saw him. And what is more, anyone who caressed him, felt a throb of transcendental joy pass through his frame. Anyone, who saw him, wanted to take him in his lap and caress him. He passed from hand to hand. Mother Shachi hardly found an opportunity to fondle him. She could do so only, when the child was hungry and had to be fed, or when it was time to sleep. It was only at that time that she felt she was the mother of her child.

²⁶ C. C., 1, 13, 21 - 23.

²⁷ C. Bh., 1, 3, 16, 26.

²⁸ ibid, 10.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHILD

THE MYSTERY OF THE FOOTPRINTS

One day, soon after his birth, the child Nimai was sleeping on the bed. At that time Jagannath Mishra and Shachi saw small footprints in the sleeping room. The footprints bore clear marks of *dhvaja* (banner), *bajra* (weapon of Indra), *shankha* (conch), *chakra* (discus) and *mina* (fish), which the Lord alone has on His feet. They wondered who left the prints. The child was so young that he could not make any movement. There was no question of his coming down from the bed and walking in the room. Jagannath said that it was perhaps the Bala-gopala deity of his house, who had moved about in the room and left the prints. As he said this the child's sleep was broken and he began to cry. Shachi began to feed him. As she was feeding she was surprised to see the marks on his feet. She called Jagannath. Jagannath was also surprised to see the marks. He called Nilambara Chakravarti. Nilambara laughed and said, "I have already calculated from his horoscope and written the thirty-two marks, which he

should have on his hands and feet—the marks which Narayana has. I am now happy to see the same marks on his hands and feet. I shall, therefore, perform his Nam-karana (name giving) ceremony today and give him the name ‘Vishvambhar’ (all-holding or supporting), because the child will nourish the world by preaching Bhakti. You should celebrate the occasion by feeding Brahamins.”¹

The custom amongst the Bengalis is that at the time of Nam-karana they judge the disposition of the child by keeping before him gold, silver, food grains, sweets, pen, books and a number of other things and watching which of them he picks. When this was done in the case of Nimai, he picked up *Srimad Bhagavat*. This was taken as an indication that he would preach the Bhagavat-dharma.

OTHER MYSTERIES

Nimai was now four months old. Even at this age he was playful and mischievous. He lay asleep on the bed. When he saw that his mother was not there, he came down and scattered everything in the house hither and thither. When he saw that the mother was coming, he quietly went back to the bed and pretended to sleep. As soon as the mother came he started crying. The mother pacified him by chanting ‘Hari, Hari’. But when she saw everything in the house, milk, curd, rice, etc.

¹ C. C., 1, 14, 4 - 16.

scattered, there was no end to her surprise. This could not be the work of a child four months old. Then who could have done it?

Jagannath Mishra and Shachi saw, from time to time, some supernatural things appear round the child. Sometimes, when he was asleep, they saw something like a moon shining on his breast. Sometimes they saw him enveloped with a light like electricity. Sometimes Shachi saw at night some luminous figures in the room. She thought they were evil spirits. She blew with her mouth on the body of the child, uttering some Mantra, so that they might not do him any harm and invoked the gods to protect him. One day she saw some luminous figures surrounding him and caressing him. She was frightened. She called Jagannath, who was sleeping in another room. She asked him to take away the child so that he might sleep under his protection.

NIMAI PLAYS WITH THE SERPENT

When Nimai learnt to crawl, he moved about freely and fearlessly in the courtyard. He caught hold of everything he found and played with it. One day he saw a serpent (Cobra) and ran after it. He stretched his lotus hand and held it. The serpent, instead of doing him any harm, coiled round him. When the parents saw this they shrieked aloud. They thought that Nimai was playing with death. But Nimai was smiling, still holding the tail of the serpent in his tiny hand. Soon

he lay down on it. The parents only wept and cried. There was nothing else they could do. The neighbours heard their cry and came running. They were aghast to see Nimai comfortably lying on the serpent and smiling. They cried 'Garuda, Garuda!'² The serpent then released Nimai and went away. Nimai again ran after it. But Jagannath ran and lifted him up in his lap.³

One might wonder and ask whether this was the little Lord's Sheshashayi-lila? Who can answer this except the Lord?

Krishnadasa Kaviraj says that when the lord incarnates as a human being, He behaves like the human beings and His *lila* is called *nara-lila*,⁴ but there runs in it an under current of *aishvarya* or lordliness, which is natural to Him, though He is not conscious of it.⁵ His Lila-shakti Yogamaya makes Him unaware of His divinity and divine powers. If she did not do so, neither the Lord nor His devotees would enjoy the *madhurya* or sweetness of the Lila. Therefore the Lord Himself empowers Lila-shakti to function in this manner. It was possible for Nimai to toy with the serpent like an innocent child, because the divine in him was working without his knowledge.

² A bird, which Vishnu rides and which is the enemy of snakes.

³ C. Bh., 1, 3.

⁴ Lila as of human beings.

⁵ C. C., 1, 14, sloka 2.

NIMAI AND THE FORTUNATE PILGRIM

One evening there came to the house of Jagannath Misra a Brahmin pilgrim, who was a devotee of Bala-gopala. He always chanted 'Krishna, Krishna' and his eyes were always wet on account of his love for Krishna. He never ate anything without offering it to Bala-gopala. He was seeking shelter to stay somewhere for the night, when he came to Jagannath. Jagannath welcomed him. Since he was hungry Jagannath gave him provisions to cook and eat.

After the Brahmin had cooked, he sat down with his eyes closed to meditate on Bala-gopala and to offer to Him the plate of food placed in front of him. In the meantime came crawling the naked Nimai. He stopped for a while to look at the Brahmin, then smiled and picked a morsel of food from the plate and gulped.⁶ When the Brahmin opened his eyes, he was aghast to see the child eating from the plate. He shouted, "Krishna, Krishna! What has this child done? He has spoiled the offering." Jagannath Misra heard and came running. He saw Nimai eating with pleasure and smiling. Misra was angry. He was about to beat him, when the Brahmin held his hand and said, "Misra! What kind of a Pandit are you? Don't you know that the child is innocent? Does he know what he is doing?"⁷ Jagannath sat down with his head cast down

⁶ C. Bh., 1, 5, 35.

⁷ ibid, 39 - 40.

and hand on forehead in lamenting mood. The Brahamin said, "Misra! You need not worry. Perhaps Krishna does not want that I should eat cooked food today. I shall take any fruits that you may have." Jagannath and everyone else, who had assembled there to see the Lila of Nimai, requested that he might kindly take the trouble of cooking once more. The Brahamin agreed. Jagannath asked his servant Isana to provide the provisions once again. It was decided that in order to prevent Nimai from repeating the offense, he should be taken elsewhere and not brought home until the Brahamin had cooked and eaten. So Shachi took him in her lap and went to a neighbours house.⁸

The Brahmin cooked and sat down to offer the *bhog*⁹ to Bala-gopala with his eyes closed as before. The Bala-gopala in Nimai came to know and desired to go at the Brahmin's call to eat the *bhog*. Yogamaya used her Shakti to make it possible for her Lord to go without being noticed by any one. He went and took a handful of rice from the *bhog* and ate. As the Brahmin opened his eyes, he saw the same mischievous child running away after again taking a handful from the *bhog*.¹⁰ He shouted "Krishna Krishna! The child has again spoiled the *bhog*." Jagannath Misra was wild with rage to hear him cry again. He rushed with a stick in hand to beat Nimai. But Nimai had

⁸ C. Bh., 1, 5, 52.

⁹ C. Bh., 1, 5, 57 - 58.

¹⁰ C. Bh., 1, 5, 64 - 65.

fled and hidden himself in a room. When Jagannath was about to enter the room the Brahamin and others, who were present, prevented him from going in. Again he sat down deplored that the devoted Brahamin guest could not be fed. The Brahamin said, "Misra Ji! Do not worry. Krishna does not desire that I should eat cooked food today. The child is not to blame." But Jagannath was so much aggrieved that he could neither raise his head nor say anything.

At this time came Vishvarup, the elder brother of Nimai, who had been out for a long time and knew nothing about the arrival of the Brahamin and Nimai's mischievous behaviour towards him. He looked like the very figure of Vairagya and Bhakti¹¹ with a divine lustre on his face and the sacred thread hanging from his shoulder on his half-naked body. He was surprised to see the Brahamin surrounded by a number of sympathizers and his father sitting quietly in a corner in grief. On inquiry he came to know everything. Then he made obeisance to the Brahamin and said, "Maharaj! It is our great good fortune that we have you as our guest. You are self-realized and self-contented. You go about in the world only to purify it. I am sorry to learn about all that has happened. But if you remain hungry, that will be a bad omen for us."

The Brahmin was happy to see Vishvarup. He embraced him and said, "You need not worry. What is

¹¹ C. Bh., 1, 5, 79 - 83.

happening is due to the desire of Krishna. One may have plenty to eat, but if Krishna does not want, he cannot eat. Krishna does not want that I should eat cooked food today. Therefore I cooked twice and twice He foiled my attempt to eat. I am also not accustomed to eat cooked food. I live in the forests, where nothing is available except some fruits, which I eat with pleasure. You may also give me some fruits. It is also very late in the night now and it is not the time to cook.”¹²

But Vishvarup fell at his feet and requested him to cook once more. He assured him that he would keep proper watch over the younger brother and let him not do any mischief again. The Brahamin had to agree. He was again supplied provisions and again started cooking.

“Where is the mischievous Nimai?” Vishvarup asked and looked all round. The ladies inside the room, in which he had been hiding, said, “He is now asleep. So you need not bother about him anymore.”¹³ Nimai alone knew whether he was actually sleeping or pretending to sleep.

Jagannath Misra, who was so far sitting quietly and moaning, came with a stick in hand and sat at the door of the room, in which Nimai was supposed to be sleeping, so that he might not be allowed to come

¹² C. Bh., 1, 5, 89 - 91.

¹³ ibid, 117.

out, if per chance he awoke.¹⁴ All others in the house also said, "We shall all keep a watch and not let even the shadow of Nimai appear, where the Brahamin guest is cooking."

Yogamaya knew that the benign Lord wanted to give *darshan* to the devoted Brahamin. Therefore, after the Brahamin had cooked, she made everyone, keeping watch over Nimai, asleep by her Maya.¹⁵

When the Brahamin was offering the food to Bala-gopala in meditation, Nimai came to know and went to him crawling and smiling. As soon as he opened his eyes, he was stupefied to see the same mischievous child again greedily and smilingly looking at the *bhog*. He again cried, "Krishna, Krishna! The child is here again." But since everyone was asleep, no one heard him cry.¹⁶

This time the Bala-gopala in Nimai was pleased to reveal Himself to the blessed Brahamin. He said, "Brahmin! You are so generous. After cooking you offer the *bhog* to Me by repeating My Mantra. You call Me and I come. What is My fault?"¹⁷

Truly He was not at fault. He would have been at fault, if He did not respond to the Brahmin's call. But how could the Brahmin know it was his Bala-gopala Himself, Who came to him in the form of the mischievous child and ate the *bhog* everytime he

¹⁴ ibid, 114.

¹⁵ C. Bh., 1, 5, 129 -121.

¹⁶ ibid, 122 - 12.

¹⁷ C. Bh., 1, 5, 125.

offered it to Him. Therefore this time the merciful Lord decided to show him His true form. Gopal went on to say, "Because you always want to see Me, I come to give *darshan* to you, but you do not recognize Me. Now see." As He said this the Brahmin saw before him, instead of the child, His eight armed form, holding in His four hands *shankha* (conch), *chakra* (discus), *gada* (club) and *padma* (lotus), blowing the flute with two and eating butter with the other two.¹⁸ At the same time he saw the celestial Vrindavan with the *gopas*, *gopis* and the cows going about all round and the birds twittering on *kadamba* trees.¹⁹ As he saw this, he fell senseless on the ground.²⁰

The merciful Lord then caressed him with His hand. On receiving the divine touch of His lotus hand, he regained consciousness. He was so overwhelmed with joy that he went into stupor. He wanted to speak, but could not. Repeatedly he became unconscious and fell on the ground. Tears streamed out of his eyes. Tremor, horripilation and the other Sattvik *bhavs* appeared on his body. After some time he held the feet of the Lord and began to weep.²¹

The Lord then said, "Listen, life after life you have been my servant. In the Dvapara Yuga, I appeared in Gokula as the son of Nand. At that time also, when

¹⁸ ibid, 1, 5, 126 - 128.

¹⁹ C. Bh., 1, 5 , 133 - 134.

²⁰ ibid, 135.

²¹ ibid, 136 - 140.

I was a child you were once a guest at his house as a pilgrim. You cooked your food and offered it to your Bala-gopala. I ate your offering and gave you *darshan* in this very form. However, I warn you that you must not disclose this secret to anyone so long as I am present on this planet. I have incarnated this time to preach *kirtan* and to distribute freely ‘*prem-bhakti*’ for which even Brahma and the gods crave, as you will yourself see later.”²²

Nimai then went back to his room and slept. No one could know anything on account of ‘Yoga-nidra’ (the sleep caused by Yogamaya).²³

The Brahmin could not contain his joy after having the *darshan* of his Lord. He laughed and danced and shouted, ‘Jai Bala-gopala!’ He ate the *prasad* of the Lord and rubbed it on his body, with tears flowing from his eyes.²⁴

On hearing the shouts of the Brahmin consciousness returned to everyone sleeping under the influence of Yogamaya. The Brahmin then controlled his *bhav* and sat down to eat. Everyone was satisfied to see him eating.

The Brahmin wanted very much to tell everyone that in the form of the child Nimai had appeared in the house of Jagannath the Lord Himself, Whose *darshan* even Brahma and Shiva craved, but he could

²² C. Bh., 1, 5, 142 - 153.

²³ ibid, I, 5, 155.

²⁴ C. Bh., 1, 5, 157.

not because of the warning given by the Lord. He stopped going on pilgrimage anywhere and lived secretly in Navadvip throughout his life as a beggar. Everyday he came once to the house of Jagannath Misra to have the *darshan* of his Lord.²⁵

NIMAI AND THE KIDNAPPERS

After sometime Nimai began to walk. Mother Shachi did not let him go out. She always kept her eye on him. When he tried to sneak out, she ran after him. But she could not catch him, because he was more swift-footed. He scampered away. She kept shouting, 'Nimai, Nimai!' Nimai did not listen. In utter helplessness tears came out of her eyes. Nimai could not see the tears in her eyes. He came back running and flung his arms round her.

Once, however, Nimai succeeded in going out without being noticed by anyone. Two thieves saw him. They felt attracted by his ornaments and wanted to kidnap him. They beguiled him by sweet words. One of them said, "My little darling! Where have you been so long, away from home?" He took him in his lap and said, "Let us go home." Nimai said, "Yes, let us go home." They started for home, but for their own home, not Nimai's. After they had gone a long distance Yogamaya so influenced their minds that they turned towards Jagannath Misra's house, thinking that they

²⁵ C. Bh., 1, 5, 161 - 166.

were going towards their own house. They were rejoicing at the thought that the ornaments had all but come into their greedy hands and thinking as to how they would divide them between themselves—who would take the necklaces, who the bangles?

In the meantime, Nimai's continued absence from home had filled Jagannath Misra with anxiety. The neighbours, who loved Nimai more than their own sons, were equally filled with anxiety. They had started going about in search of him, shouting, 'Nimai, Nimai!' Some of the neighbours had also assembled at the house of Jagannath Misra and were trying to assuage his anxiety. When the thieves reached his house, they still thought they had come to their own house. They said to Nimai, "Darling! Now get down. We have come home." Nimai said, "Yes, I will get down." As soon as he got down, he ran towards Jagannath. The thieves were puzzled to see Jagannath and the crowd of neighbours at his house. They looked all round in amazement and realized their mistake. During the ecstasies that followed Nimai's return at the house of Jagannath Misra, they escaped.²⁶

NIMAI EATS EARTH

One day Nimai was playing in the courtyard. Shachi gave him *sandesh*²⁷ and parched rice to eat and went

²⁶ C. Bh., 1, 3, ; C. C., 1, 14, 35.

²⁷ A sweet prepared from milk and sugar.

in to do some work. As soon as she went in, he began to eat earth. When she saw him eating earth, she came running, took the earth out of his mouth and said angrily, "Silly boy! Why do you eat earth?" Nimai said, "Ma! Why are you angry? You gave me earth to eat. How am I at fault? *Sandesh* and parched rice are also the transformations of earth. What is the difference between them and the earth I ate? Ma! If you deliberate you will find that everything is essentially earth in a different form. Our body is earth and all that we eat is earth." Shachi was stupefied to see her little child teaching her *jyana-yoga*. She retorted in anger. "Foolish child! You teach me. You do not know that though body and the food grains are both ultimately transformations of earth, the body is nourished, if we eat food grains and suffers, if we eat earth. This is the difference." Then Nimai said, "Ma! Why did you not teach me that before? I shall never eat earth again. When I feel hungry I shall suck milk from your breast." As he said this, he jumped into her lap and began to suck at her breast. In this manner, Kaviraj Gosvami says, mischievous Nimai showed his *aishvarya* for a while by talking like a pandit and philosopher, then concealed himself under the cover of his *madhurya* as a sweet and innocent child.²⁸

On another occasion Nimai manifested his *aishvarya* in a different way. Ma Shachi asked him to go out and call Jagannath. As he went both Shachi

²⁸ C. C., 1, 14, 21 -33.

and Jagannath were surprised to hear the jingling sound of *nupurs*,²⁹ because he was not wearing *nupurs*. The story of the jingling *nupurs* is mentioned by both Vrindavan Das Thakur³⁰ and Kavikarnapura.³¹

NIMAI EATS THE OFFERINGS INTENDED FOR VISHNU

One day the sportive Nimai pretended to be ill and started weeping. They chanted Harinam for a long time, still they could not make him stop weeping. Other efforts to pacify him also failed. When persuaded very much to tell what would make him happy, he said, "You go to the house of Jagadish and Hiranya. Today is Ekadasi. They are fasting, but they have collected different kinds of food to be offered to Vishnu. If you bring and give it all to me, without offering to Vishnu, then alone my illness will disappear and I shall be happy." Everyone was surprised to hear this. They did not know what to do. How could they ask Jagadish and Hiranya not to offer Naivedya³² to Vishnu? How could they give Naivedya meant for Vishnu to Nimai? When however, Jagadish and Hiranya came to know about this, they wondered how the child came to know that it was Ekadasi that day, how he came to know

²⁹ A tinkling ornament worn around the ankles.

³⁰ C. Bh., 1, 3.

³¹ *Mahakavya*, 2, 81 - 89.

³² Food not yet offered to God.

about the various kinds of Naivedya to be offered to Vishnu! Why, he insisted on eating only the Naivedya meant for Vishnu! It was strange for a child of his age to do so. They thought that perhaps in his body resided Bala-gopala. That was why he was so beautiful. Without doubt it was not he; but Bala-gopala in him, who desired to eat the Naivedya. How kindly disposed Gopal was to them! It was indeed a matter of great joy for them. They thought they were blest. They brought the Naivedya to Nimai and said, "Nimai! Eat and be happy!" Nimai stopped weeping and started eating. Happily he ate while everyone sang '*Hari bol!* *Hari bol!*' Nimai danced in the *kirtan* as he ate a little from each of the different kinds of Naivedya.³³

As Nimai grew older his sportiveness and mischievousness increased. He went out and played with the boys of his age. He went to the neighbour's house and asked for things to eat. He had no hesitation in asking, because he regarded every home as his own and the neighbours loved him more than their own sons. They gave him freely and happily whatever he wanted, milk, butter, banana, parched rice or *sandesh*. If by chance there was nothing to give and the pots were empty, he broke the pots or played some other mischief and came away. The neighbours enjoyed his mischief. Because he was so sweet, his mischief also appeared sweet and enjoyable. But sometimes they went to his parents to complain against him only for

³³ C. Bh., 1, 4.

the sake of fun. When the parents chastised him, they felt hurt at heart and said, "Do not chastise Nimai. He is so sweet and innocent a child. His mischief instead of causing displeasure causes amusement to us. We come to complain not in order that you may chastise him, but in order that you may share the amusement with us."

THE DANCE OF NIMAI

Nimai loved to dance. Everything about him was extraordinary. His beauty, his golden colour, his size and health, his smile and laughter, speech and silence, gait and demeanour, simplicity and cleverness, sportiveness and mischievousness all were extraordinary. But his dance was more than extraordinary. It was not contrived or artificial, but the natural expression of the joy that reigned in his heart. No, he was himself joy, transcendental joy or *anand* that had concentrated and assumed his form. So when he danced he automatically filled the environment with transcendental joy. Those who saw his dance felt the thrill of that joy. It made them realize that there was joy everywhere, that God Himself was joy and nothing else. It was a treat to see that four year old Nimai, that golden figure of joy, dance. His exquisitely beautiful face, bright as moon, tender limbs, slender waist tightly wrapped with a piece of cloth, curly hair, carefully tied into a knot and decorated with flowers, all added to the charm of the dance. When Shachi and

her female friends asked him to dance, he did not dance. When, however, they promised to give him banana or *sandesh*, he smiled and started dancing. But in the midst of his playmates outside he danced of his own. Dance was his favourite game. He danced with both of his arms raised, singing 'Haribol' and his friends danced round him. The women returning from the Ganga-*ghat* after bathing and the passers-by could not resist the temptation of tarrying for a while to see his dance. But once they stopped they could not move until the performance ended. They felt that there was something in the dance of the golden child, which touched their inner self and made them feel, at least for the time being, that they were delivered from bondage.

NIMAI TEASES SHACHI

Nimai was a wayward child. He acted according to his whim and did not listen to anyone. He feared only his father and brother Vishvarup. He cared little for his mother, even though he loved her so much. He treated her as if she was a child of his own age and his play-mate. Therefore he took pleasure in teasing her in various ways. Sometimes she looked at him intently and continuously to drink to her heart's content the ambrosia of his beauty, as it were, with the cup of her eyes. Nimai understood what she was doing. He deprived her of the pleasure by turning his back against her. She said, "Little rogue!" and forcibly pulled him

in her lap and kissed him again and again, as if to punish him for his misconduct.

Shachi had a deep sense of outward purity like all Hindu ladies of high caste. She bathed, if she happened to touch a thing or person considered impure or a person, who had touched an impure thing and had not bathed. Nimai deliberately touched a low caste man or an object like a broom, that was regarded as impure and ran after her to touch her. She had to run into a room and close the door from inside. While still inside the room she reprimanded him by saying, "Nimai! You are the son of a Brahmin. Are you not ashamed of touching impure things?" Nimai answered gravely, "The idea of external purity and impurity is false."

Shachi was taken aback. How could a child of five talk like that! She began to think that he was a sage in the guise of a child and that he was not her son but preceptor and she his witless pupil. But his childish behaviour soon made her forget all that.

NIMAI TEASES MURARI GUPT

One day Nimai chose to play mischief with Murari Gupt. Murari was a Vaidya³⁴ by caste and profession. He lived near the house of Jagannath Misra. He was a devotee of Ram, but he was very much impressed by Sankaracarya and his philosophy and used to talk of

³⁴ Ayurvedic doctor.

jnana.³⁵ That day, when five year old Nimai was playing with the children of his age outside his house, Murari happened to pass from that side with his friends. He was at that time commenting upon ‘*aham brahmasmi*’ (I am Brahma) and ‘*sarvam khalu idam brahma*’ (all is Brahma), the principal propositions of *jnana*, with terrific zeal, shaking his head and hands. He heard some boys clapping and laughing behind him. As he turned round, he saw that the son of Jagannath was aping him, and saying jeeringly ‘*aham brahmasmi*’ and ‘*sarvam khalu idam brahma*’ and shaking his head and hands like him. His companions also were doing the same and laughing and clapping. Murari got angry. He said to his companions, “Look, this is Nimai. People say he is divine and has divine qualities. He is actually a demon born in the house of Jagannath.” Nimai heard and laughed. But the next moment he said, “Alright, I shall teach you a lesson today at the time of lunch.”

Murari went home, but carried with him the charming image of Nimai in anger in his heart. He wondered why the son of Jagannath, who was so naughty, attracted him so much. At midday, when he sat down to eat, the same image repeatedly came before his mind. He was thinking of him, when suddenly he entered his courtyard, saying, “Murari, what are you doing?” Murari was taken aback. He was reminded of his words: “I shall teach you a lesson today at the

³⁵ The way of knowledge, which aims at union with Brahman.

time of lunch." He wondered what he would do. In his anxiety he kept looking at him for some time. Nimai went and stood before him and said, "No matter Murari. Take your food." Murari started eating. Suddenly Nimai passed urine on his plate. "Puh, Puh! What are you doing," Murari shrieked. Nimai laughed, danced and clapped and said "*sarvam khalu idam brahma!* — all is brahma." Then he came near Murari and said angrily, "Murari! You are a dunce. You give me much pain by regarding *jiva* as Brahman and Krishna as illusion and by saying that *jnana* is superior to Bhakti. Don't do that again."

He said this and disappeared, Murari could not know how and where he had gone. He was surprised to see a five year old child ridicule '*sarvam khalu idam brahma*' by passing urine on his plate of food, give philosophical advice and disappear. He was also surprised to see that when he was giving him a warning, his face was radiant with transcendental light and eyes were red with anger. He understood that the son of Jagannath Misra was not an ordinary child, but Sri Krishna Himself.

Mischievous Nimai, after making mischief, ran and took shelter in the lap of his mother. Murari went after him. On seeing Murari, he, like a guilty child, covered his face with the *ancal*³⁶ of his mother. Still Murari made obeisance to him a number of times.

³⁶ Loose end of the sari hanging from the head.

Jagannath Misra said, "Murari! What are you doing? You should bless him, instead of making obeisance." Murari said, "Misra Ji! you do not know him. You will know later. You are so fortunate."

After this Murari went to Advaitcharya and told him everything. He never talked of *jnana* again.

NIMAI DEFIES GODS AND GODDESSES

Shachi got very much concerned about the mischievous behaviour of Nimai, which was increasing day by day. She was particularly concerned about the disrespect he showed towards gods and goddesses and his eating their Naivedya. She apprehended that on account of the sacrilege committed by him some evil might befall upon him. She did not know what to do. She called the elderly ladies of the neighbourhood and told her tale of grief to them. She said, "Nimai is very intelligent for his age and very affectionate to me. But he is wayward and obstinate. He has his own ideas of purity and impurity and everything that pertains to gods and goddesses. When I scold him for touching impure things, he says, 'I am the Lord. Everything impure becomes pure by my touch.' He has no reverence for gods and does not hesitate to eat the offerings intended for them." The ladies said, "This is a serious matter indeed. Can you say since when and how this change has came upon him?" Shachi replied, "I do not know. But one night I saw some luminous figures bending upon him while he was asleep and caressing him. The

change might have come because of their influence." The ladies then concluded that it was all due to the influence of those fiends. At this point, as chance would have it, Nimai arrived on the scene. The eldest of the ladies accosted him, saying, "Nimai! You are the son of a learned Brahmin and you do not revere gods." Nimai smiled mockingly and said, "I do not revere anyone. Every one must revere me."

Shachi was shocked. She said to the ladies, "Listen what he says" and burst into tears.

She began to worship goddess Shasti (protector of children) with greater devotion so that she might protect her child from the evil spirits.

CHAPTER V

THE MISCHIEVOUS SCHOOL-BOY

When Nimai was about five or six years old, he was admitted to the school of Vishnu Pandit for elementary education. But instead of attending the class he collected his classmates, all between six and eight years old, and went to the bank of Ganga to play. Since Navadvip was at that time a big city and many people went to bathe in the Ganga, the bank of Ganga used to be crowded with men and women, young and old. Therefore Nimai found there ample scope for his playfulness and mischievousness. He enjoyed teasing the people on the bank. The people also enjoyed his pranks. Such was the magic of his personality that even those, who rebuked him for mischief done to them, enjoyed the mischief in their heart.

Nimai chose the time for his pranks in Ganga judiciously. The school opened early and closed late in the morning. Therefore he had sufficient time to indulge in his pranks and return home in time for the midday meal, that is, immediately after the school closed, so that no one could suspect that he had not attended the school.

Various were the ways in which he played his pranks. He plunged into the river with his friends and played with water. While they threw water on one another, Nimai threw water with his legs on the people sitting on the bank after bathing, or spat on them. They had to bathe again to purify themselves. After they had bathed he again threw water or spat on them and again they had to bathe. They scolded him, but he did not listen. If they tried to catch him, he dived deep or swam away so fast that it was not possible for them to catch him.¹

He saw someone meditating on the bank after bathing. He went to him and said, "Whom are you meditating upon? Open your eyes and see the Narayana of Kali standing before you to give you *darshan*."² Did he tell a lie? Certainly not, but no one could understand him.

He stole and ran away with someone's Shivalinga,³ and someone's *uttariya* (upper garment).⁴

Someone brought articles of worship for worshipping Vishnu, flowers, *durva* grass, sandal-wood paste, food offerings and *asana* for Vishnu to sit. Before worshipping he went to bathe in the river and kept the articles on the bank. Nimai went and sat on

¹ C. Bh ., 1, 6, 47 - 54.

² ibid, 58.

³ Siva-linga made of clay.

⁴ C. Bh ., 1, 6, 59.

Vishnu's *asana*, ate the food-offerings intended for Vishnu and ran.⁵

If he saw banana or some other fruit, which someone had brought for offering to God, he snatched the fruit and ate. On his protest he said, "The God, Whom you wanted to offer the fruit to eat, has eaten with pleasure. So why worry?"⁶

If he saw someone standing in the river and performing ablution, he dived and pulled him by the leg.⁷ He stole someone's *dhotee*, someone's Gita.⁸ If he saw someone worshipping Mahesha (Shiva) on the bank, he climbed his shoulder to use it as a diving-board and plunged into the river, saying, "I am Mahesha."⁹

Another mischief, he was fond of playing, was that when people bathed, he went to the bank and changed their clothes. He placed the *pajama* of some man at the spot where a woman had kept her *sari* and the *sari* at the spot of the *pajama*. When they had bathed and were about to change their clothes, they wondered and blushed with shame, the lady to see the *pajama* in place of *sari* and the man to see the *sari* in place of *pajama*.¹⁰ As they looked round them with

⁵ ibid, 60 - 61.

⁶ C. Bh., 1 , 6 , 62.

⁷ ibid, 63.

⁸ ibid, 64.

⁹ ibid, 66.

¹⁰ ibid, 69.

anger and anxiety to find their clothes, Nimai and his companions laughed and clapped.

Nimai whispered something into the ear of some woman to tease her. If she admonished him, he threw water on her.¹¹ He even went to some one and proposed to marry her.¹²

He went and sat among the unmarried girls, worshipping some god or goddess after bathing in the river. He said to them, "Worship me. I shall give you the desired boon. Lakshmi, Durga and Mahesha and all other gods and goddesses are my servants." He snatched from them the offerings, intended for gods and ate. The girls became angry and said, "Look Nimai, according to *gram-sambandha* (relationship on account of living in the same village or place) you are our brother. It is not proper for you to behave towards us like this. Do not spoil the articles for worship and eat the offerings meant for gods."¹³ Nimai said, "I am the same Whom you worship. I have eaten with pleasure the offerings you brought. I give you the boon that each one of you may have a husband, beautiful, wealthy and wise and each may have seven sons."¹⁴ The girls felt pleased to hear the boon, but pretended to be angry and reprimanded him.¹⁵

¹¹ ibid, 74.

¹² ibid, 78.

¹³ C. C., 1, 14, 45 - 50.

¹⁴ ibid, 51 - 52.

¹⁵ ibid, 53.

If any of them ran away with the offerings, he shouted, "Listen, if you do not give me the offerings, I will curse that you may have an old husband and four co-wives." The girl got frightened. She apprehended that he might be possessed by some god and his words might come true. She placed the offerings before him to eat, and he gave her the boon, he gave to the other girls.¹⁶ On the elderly ladies as well he sometimes spat, sometimes threw sand after they had bathed.¹⁷

His pranks increased day by day. Everyone enjoyed his pranks. No one was displeased.¹⁸ But sometimes men as well as women, specially the unmarried girls, upon whom he spat or threw sand, went to Jagannath Mishra and Shachi to complain against him before they bathed again to purify themselves. They did not do so in order that Nimai might be punished, but in order that there might be some more fun, which the parents also might enjoy, because the thought had begun to take root in their hearts that Nimai was no other than the Son of Nand of old, Who was as naughty as he and loved like him to play pranks.¹⁹

Shachi listened to the complaints of the girls and laughed, but she assured them that she would take

¹⁶ C. C., 1, 14, 57.

¹⁷ C. Bh., 1, 6, 76.

¹⁸ C. C., 1, 14, 58.

¹⁹ C. Bh., 1, 6, 80.

Nimai to task when he came back home.²⁰ But Jagannath Misra burnt with rage to hear the complaints and said, "I shall teach Nimai a good lesson." Once he took a stick in hand and started going towards the bank.²¹

The girls, however, reached the bank before Jagannath Misra and said to Nimai, "Nimai run away. Your father is coming with a stick to beat you."²² Nimai ran, but said to his companions, "When father comes you tell him that Nimai did not come here. He went home from the school and promised to come later. We are all waiting for him."²³

Jagannath reached the bank and began to look for Nimai. Not finding him there he enquired from his companions about him. They said, "Nimai went home from school and promised to come here later. So we are all waiting for him." But the Brahamins, who had gone to complain to Jagannath against him had to say, "Misra Thakur! Vishvambhar was here, but when he came to know that you were coming, he ran away out of fear. You go home and you will find him there. But do not say anything to him this time. If he again misbehaves, we shall ourselves catch hold of him and take him to you. We did not want that you should punish him. We went to complain to you so that you

²⁰ ibid, 83 - 85.

²¹ ibid, 90.

²² C. Bh., 1, 6, 92.

²³ ibid, 94 - 95.

might also feel amused to hear about his pranks. Misra Purandara! No one in the three worlds is more fortunate than you. You must have served the Lord well in your previous lives to have a son like him. Even if he commits offenses against us a hundred million times, we shall always hold him dear to our heart.”²⁴

Jagannath Misra was pleased. He embraced the Brahmins and said, “Vishvambhar is your own child. I am confident that you would not take his offense.”

In the meantime Nimai spattered a few drops of ink over his body and rolled a little in dust, so that it might appear that he had just returned from school and had not gone to Ganga to bathe. Then he went home through another route and reached there before his father. He said to Shachi, “Ma! Give me oil.²⁵ I shall go to Ganga to bathe,” as if he had just returned from school and must bathe before taking his meal.

Shachi was happy to see him without any sign of bathing in Ganga on his body. She wondered why the girls had made false complaint against him.²⁶ Shortly after came Jagannath. Nimai at once ran and flung himself into his lap.²⁷ Misra embraced him and lost outward consciousness. He was happy as well as astonished to see the ink marks and dust on his body and no sign at all of his playing in the waters of

²⁴ C. Bh., 1, 6, 101 - 107.

²⁵ Bengali's usually apply oil on their body before bath.

²⁶ C. Bh., 1, 6, 116 -117.

²⁷ ibid, 118.

Ganga.²⁸ Still he said, "Nimai! I was sorry to hear the people complain this morning that you do not let them bathe peacefully and run away with their offerings for Vishnu. Why do you do so? Are you not afraid of Vishnu?"²⁹

Nimai replied, "Baba! It is the other boys, who must have misbehaved with them. I did not even go to the Ganga today. If they still blame me, I shall now do the very things they complain about."³⁰

As Nimai said this he proceeded towards Ganga. When he arrived there his companions were very happy to see him. They welcomed him with shouts of 'Haribol!', embraced him and appreciated his skill in tricking Jagannath Misra.³¹

Jagannath Misra and Shachi sat cogitating over the whole affair. They said to each other, "The Brahmans and the ladies, who came to complain cannot be disbelieved. But at the same time the shape in which Nimai came from the school seemed to belie their complaints. He had the spots of ink and dust on his body, his hair and clothes were dry and there was no sign at all of his having been playing in the river. Nimai does not seem to be human. He may be Krishna or a Mahapurusha."³² They often thought of Nimai

²⁸ ibid, 119 - 120.

²⁹ ibid, 121 - 122.

³⁰ ibid, 125.

³¹ C. Bh., 1, 6, 126 - 128.

³² ibid, 129 - 133.

like this, but his very sight made them drive out such thoughts from their mind and regard him as no one except their fond child.³³

VISHVARUP'S SANNYAS AND NIMAL

Nimai's mischievousness went on increasing and with it the anxiety of Jagannath Misra and Shachi. Nimai did not listen to anyone except his elder brother Vishvarup, whom he loved and respected more than anyone else. But Vishvarup hardly remained at home or took any interest in the affairs of the family. He was the very figure of Vairagya and Bhakti and remained always absorbed in *Krishna-katha*, *Krishna-puja* and *Krishna-kirtan*.³⁴ He was at this time only sixteen years old, but he had mastered all the Shastras. He proclaimed that Bhakti was the essence of all Shastras. He was convinced of the futility of the world and the worldly activities. He passed his time from morning till evening in the company of Advaitcharya and the Vaishnavs, who surrounded him. Shachi had to send Nimai to call him for the midday meal, when it was ready. Each time he went there, Advaitcharya and his companions felt so much attracted by his beauty and the divine lustre on his face that they almost went into Samadhi.³⁵ They began to love him more than their sons.

³³ ibid, 134.

³⁴ C. Bh., 1, 7, 16.

³⁵ ibid, 42.

We have said before that everyone, including even those, against whom Nimai played mischief, loved him more than his sons. This seems unnatural and mysterious. Vrindavan Das says that a similar mystery was solved by Sri Shukadeva in relation to Krishna, when Parikṣita asked him why the *gopas* and *gopis* loved Him even more than their children. Shukadeva replied, "It is natural for every devotee to love Krishna more than his son, because Krishna as PaRamtman sits in the heart of everyone and is the life and soul of each soul, not excluding the souls of the children of the *gopas* and *gopis*."³⁶ Advaitcharya always wondered who Vishvarup's younger brother was. He said to his companions that he was certainly not human.³⁷

As Nimai went back with Vishvarup holding a corner of his *uttariya*, he looked back at the Vaishnavs with a mischievous smile. Thus he stole their hearts and left them wondering what had happened to them.³⁸

Vishvarup went home, but to return immediately after the meal. Even while at home, he remained confined to the room in which the family deity was worshipped and hardly ever looked into any family affair. His parents were somewhat concerned about his

³⁶ ibid, 52 - 55. Vrndavana Das, however, goes on to say that this is true only of the devotees, not the non-devotees like Kamsa.

³⁷ ibid, 64.

³⁸ C. Bh., 1, 7, 63.

total absorption in devotional activities and absolute indifference to worldly affairs. They thought he might change a little, if he was married. They began to look for a suitable bride for him.

When Vishvarup came to know that he was going to be tied to the world by the knot of marriage, he was alarmed. The world, specially as it was during his time, was not the place for him to live in. He immediately decided to renounce. But he felt grieved at heart at the thought of leaving wayward and mischievous Nimai alone with no one, whom he loved and respected, as he respected him, to control and guide him along proper lines so that he might not be lost in the maze of the world and might not forget the real purpose of life. Therefore one day he gave a book to his mother, saying, "Ma! You keep this book with you. Give it to Nimai to read, when he grows up. It will do good to him."

The mother was alarmed. Looking at Vishvarup with suspicion and anxiety, she said, "What do you mean? Why not you give it to him yourself?"

"Ma! You know life is uncertain. I shall give it myself, if I am alive. But you kindly keep it with you," said Vishvarup.

Shachi kept the book with her, but with an uneasy heart. The suspicion lurked in her mind that Vishvarup was perhaps planning to renounce.

Her suspicion proved true. One night Vishvarup sneaked out of home. He went to the South and took

Sannyas. His Sannyas name was Sankararanya.³⁹ The Sannyas of Vishvarup came as a thunderbolt to Shachi and Jagannath. Shachi cried, "Vishvarup, Vishvarup!" and fainted. Tears incessantly flowed from the eyes of Jagannath and he lay lifeless on the ground. Neighbours tried to console them, but in vain.

The separation of the elder brother also shocked Nimai. It was too much for his tender heart to bear. But even more unbearable to him was the grief of his parents. He tried to assuage their grief by saying, "Dada⁴⁰ has done well by taking Sannyas. His Sannyas will deliver you and our ancestors from bondage. You must not grieve. In his absence I shall serve you both with all my heart and soul."⁴¹

They were not surprised at the wisdom displayed by six or seven year old Nimai, because inspite of his age, he often talked like the learned and the wise. But they were surprised at the courage and wisdom with which he himself faced the situation inspite of the fact that no one loved Vishvarup more than him. They felt somewhat assuaged by his assurance to serve them.

Vishvarup was the soul of the assembly of Vaishnavs at the house of Advaitcharya. His Sannyas

³⁹ C. Bh., 1, 6, 72 - 73. Vrndavana Das does not mention the name of the saint from whom Visvarupa took Sannyas. It is, however, believed that he took Sannyas from Madhavendra Puri.

⁴⁰ Elder brother.

⁴¹ C. C., 1, 15, 12 - 13.

left a yawning gap in their assembly and a feeling that life had gone out of it. They spoke to Advaitcharya about their feeling. Advaitcharya cheered them by saying, "Vishvarup's absence is no doubt a great loss to us. But this is no cause for anxiety. For I have a strong feeling that Krishna has appeared somewhere."⁴² It will not be too long when you will find Him here, distributing freely to you and even your servants, to saints as well as sinners, the *prem*, which even Shuka and Prahalad could not get.⁴³ My heart is filled with joy. You should also go home and rejoice."⁴⁴

There was no end to the joy of the Vaishnavs to hear the nectarean words of Advaitcharya. They went home and always danced with joy shouting, 'Hari, Hari!'

Nimai, who played outside with his companions, heard their shouts and went to them. They asked him, "How do you come darling?" He replied with a smile, "Didn't you call me?" and ran away. Vrindavan Das says that in this way Krishna disclosed that He had come in the form of Gaurāṅga or the beautiful Gaur Sundara (Nimai), but they could not understand on account of His Maya.⁴⁵

After the renunciation of Vishvarup, however, a great change came upon Gaur Sundara. He did not go

⁴² C. Bh., 1, 7, 104.

⁴³ ibid, 107.

⁴⁴ ibid, 105.

⁴⁵ C. Bh., 1, 7, 110 - 112.

out to play. He remained always with his parents so that they might not feel the absence of Vishvarup⁴⁶ and applied himself with devotion to his studies. He had wonderful memory and understanding. Whatever he read once, he remembered for all times and grasped it so well that he could surprise everyone by commenting upon it in various ways.⁴⁷

JAGANNATH'S ANXIETY

People often came to Jagannath Misra to congratulate him on having a son like him, who was bound to grow into a Pandita as great as Vrihaspati.⁴⁸ Shachi was pleased to hear what they said, but not Jagannath. On the contrary he fell into anxiety. He said to Shachi, "Vishvarup renounced the world, because after he had read all the Shastras he was convinced of its futility. If Nimai becomes learned like him, he will also develop that understanding and renounce. If he also renounces how shall we live? We must therefore stop his study. What is the use of learning, if it leads to renunciation. An illiterate son, who stays at home, is better than a learned one, who would renounce."⁴⁹

Jagannath's apprehension was not unfounded. For Nimai had approved and appreciated the renunciation

⁴⁶ ibid, 113 - 114.

⁴⁷ ibid, 115 - 117.

⁴⁸ ibid, 118 - 119.

⁴⁹ ibid, 123 - 126.

of Vishvarup. That was sufficient indication of his own inward disposition.

But Shachi did not approve of the husband's decision to stop the study of Nimai. She said, "If Nimai remains illiterate, how will he earn his livelihood. Who will give him his daughter in marriage?"⁵⁰

Jagannath said, "Shachi, you do not know. It is not learning that feeds and makes one happy and prosperous. Krishna alone feeds all. Look at me. I am learned, yet penniless. You will find that people, who do not even know the alphabet, are prosperous to the extent that thousands of Pandits sit at their door. One may have learning, wealth and everything else required for a happy life, but if Krishna does not want, he cannot be happy. He can send disease or some cause for constant anxiety to make him unhappy inspite of all the means of enjoyment he might possess. Marriage is also predetermined by Krishna. Nimai will get the bride Krishna has determined for him, whether he is literate or illiterate. Besides so long as I am alive, I will not let him suffer want or unhappiness. So you need not worry about his well-being, marriage or anything else."⁵¹

One day Jagannath called Nimai and said, "Listen Nimai, you must stop study from today. You have to swear by me that you will not study any more."⁵²

⁵⁰ C. Bh., 1, 7, 128.

⁵¹ ibid, 1, 7, 129 - 145.

⁵² ibid, 1, 7, 146.

Nimai said, "I obey."

Nimai stopped study. But this made him very unhappy. By way of protest he started playing with the boys and doing all kinds of mischief as before.⁵³ He would sometimes stay out throughout day and night and play.⁵⁴ He adopted a destructive attitude and broke things indiscriminately. At night he covered himself and his companions with blanket and walked like a buffalo into someone's compound and pulled down the banana trees in the compound. As the owner shouted, "Buffalo, buffalo!", he ran away.⁵⁵ He closed the door of the house of someone from outside and watched the fun.⁵⁶ One day Jagannath chided him very much for his mischievousness. At night in a dream a Brahamin said to him angrily, "Misra! You regard Nimai as your son and chide him for his misconduct. Don't you know who he is. He does not need to be taught what is right and what is wrong." He replied, "Even if he be Narayana, he is my son. It is the duty of a father to teach his son." The Brahamin was pleased to hear this.⁵⁷

Nimai's mischievousness continued. One day he collected cast away earthen pots in which food was cooked, piled them one upon another and sat on them.

⁵³ C. Bh., 1, 7, 151.

⁵⁴ ibid, 153.

⁵⁵ ibid, 154 - 156.

⁵⁶ ibid, 157 - 158.

⁵⁷ C. C., 1, 14, 80 - 86.

He also besmeared his golden body with the black soot in the pots.⁵⁸ One of his companions, on his own bidding, went and reported this to Shachi. Shachi came out. As she saw Nimai sitting on the pots, regarded as impure, she exclaimed, "Oh my Lord! What do I see?! Nimai! What have you done? Do you not know that these pots are impure and one has to bathe, if he touches them?"⁵⁹ Nimai replied, "Ma! You do not let me read. How can an illiterate know what is good and what is bad? Illiterate as I am, for me all places are the same and I can sit where I like."⁶⁰ Shachi said, "Don't you know that sitting at a place, which everyone knows as impure, you have become impure?"

Then, as Vrindavan Das says, the Lord, assuming the *bhav* of the sage Duttatreya, began to say, "Ma! You are ignorant like a child. How can I ever sit at an impure place? Any place where I sit becomes a Tirtha (holy place). All the Tirthas and the Ganga reside in me. Whatever the Vedas declare as impure becomes pure by my touch. Besides Ma, how can the pots in which you cook for Vishnu be impure? By their touch whatever is impure becomes pure."⁶¹

Vrindavan Das says that thus in the manner and *bhav* of a child the Lord disclosed His identity, yet Shachi could not realize Him on account of His

⁵⁸ C. Bh., 1, 7, 162 - 165.

⁵⁹ C. Bh., 1, 7, 167 - 168.

⁶⁰ ibid, 169 - 170.

⁶¹ ibid, 171 - 178.

Maya.⁶² She said, "Nimai! Come down and bathe before your father comes. He will take you to task for your stupidity."

But Nimai laughed and said, "No, I will not come down. I shall remain sitting here, if you do not let me read." The neighbours, who had gathered there to watch the wrangle between the mother and the son, also laughed. They said reproachingly to Shachi, "Why do you not let him read? It is strange that while the other guardians have to chide their children for not reading, your child has to chide you for not letting him read. We wonder who gave you this advice."⁶³

They then said to Nimai, "Dear Nimai! Now come down. They will let you read from today. If they do not, you may do as you please."

Still Nimai sat laughing on the pots and did not come down. Shachi then pulled him down, took him in and made him bathe.

Misra Thakur had gone out. When he came Shachi told him everything. The neighbours also tried to persuade him to let Nimai read. He agreed and Nimai again started going to school.

⁶² ibid, 180.

⁶³ ibid, 184 - 186.

CHAPTER VI

THE PANDIT

Nimai was now nine years old. It was time for him to be given the sacred thread. The sacred thread ceremony was performed with great éclat.

A STRANGE PHENOMENON

One day a strange phenomenon occurred. A Brahmin came and gave Nimai a nut, betel and fruits to eat. As he was chewing the nut, he called his mother. Shachi came, but she was surprised and frightened to see a halo of light brighter than the rays of rising sun surrounding his body. He said with gravity, "I am leaving this body. The body I am leaving is your son. After I am gone tend his unconscious body with care."¹ As soon as he said this, he fell unconscious on the ground. The light that had surrounded him disappeared. With great difficulty Shachi could bring him back to consciousness by sprinkling water over his face and calling him by the name. On regaining consciousness

¹ Kadacha, 1, 21.

he was totally unaware of what had happened. When Jagannath, who was out of home when this happened, was told about the incident, he exclaimed, "O Lord! What is this Maya? I do not understand."

Murari Gupt, who mentions the incident in his Kadacha, says that Damodar Pandit also could not understand it. He said, "Sri Krishna Himself has appeared in the form of Vishvambhar. Why then did he say that he was leaving and asked Shachi to take care of her son?"²

Murari explained the phenomenon to him as follows. He said, "Listen carefully. The Lord, Who is the upholder and the sustainer of the universe and Vishvambhar, the devotee and the son of Shachi are one and the same. By appearing to have separated Himself from the devotee the Lord disclosed the secret that there was no difference between Him and His devotee. Even while the Sadhaka performs *dhyana* (meditation), *kirtan* and *sravana*, the Lord enters his body³ and he feels that he is one with Him, as did the gopis while meditating on Him.⁴ When his *sadhana* is complete, that is, when he surrenders himself completely to the Lord and thinks of nothing except Him and does nothing except what pleases Him, he attains His *svarupa* (form), which means that he becomes like Him. There is no difference between him

² ibid, 25 - 26.

³ Kadacha, 8 , 2.

⁴ ibid, 5.

and the Lord.⁵ The body of his devotee is the soul of the Lord. There is no doubt in this.”⁶

THE STUDENT

After the sacred thread ceremony Jagannath admitted Nimai to the seminary (*tol*) of Ganga Das Pandita, the biggest grammarian of his time, for studying Sanskrit grammar. A thousand students studied in his seminary, including the elderly people like Murari Gupt, the writer of *Chaitanya Charitamrita* (*Kadacha*), Kamalakant, who was famous for his knowledge of Rhetoric, Krishnanand, who wrote the *Tantrasara*.⁷ Nimai, on account of his extraordinary intelligence easily established his superiority over them all.⁸ They appeared like dwarfs in comparison to him. Sometimes he surprised even Ganga Das by criticising his commentary on a Sutra and giving his own commentary, which no one could criticise, and by subsequently criticising his commentary and reestablishing the commentary of Ganga Das. Ganga Das was proud to have a pupil like him.⁹

Nimai’s sole occupation at this time was learning. Whether at school or at home, he was always busy learning. His game also was literary wrangles with

⁵ ibid, 6.

⁶ ibid, 7.

⁷ C. Bh., 1, 8, 38.

⁸ ibid, 39.

⁹ ibid, 34 - 35.

students. He used to go to the bank of Ganga with the classmates of his age and wrangle with the students of other schools.¹⁰ There were many schools and many teachers in Navadvip. Each teacher had thousands of students. They went to the Ganga to bathe at noon. Nimai asked them to explain certain Sutras of grammar. Then he criticized their explanation and gave his own. He asked them to criticize his explanation. On their failing to criticize he criticized his own explanation. They were surprised at his intellectual gymnastics and were compelled to accept his superiority. Some of the defeated students, who could not take their defeat sportily, indulged in abuses. They threw mud and sand upon Nimai, which sometimes led to physical fighting,¹¹ in which again they had to eat a humble pie and recognize the superiority of Nimai.

After the literary squabbles and fightings on the bank of Ganga, Nimai returned home like a victorious general. He worshipped Vishnu and took *prasad*. Then he retired to some lonely place with books and wrote his commentary on the Sutras.¹²

JAGANNATHA'S ANXIETY AND DISAPPEARANCE

The fame of Nimai's extraordinary intelligence and learning spread all over Navadvip. Jagannath was

¹⁰ C. Bh., 1, 8, 41 - 43.

¹¹ ibid, 45 - 48.

¹² ibid, 73 - 76.

highly pleased to see this and Nimai's constant occupation with books. But there were certain happenings, which renewed his anxiety regarding the possibility of Nimai's Sannyas.

One day Nimai became unconscious after eating a Naivedya betel. On regaining consciousness he narrated what he saw during the period, in which he had no outward consciousness. He said, "Vishvarup came here and took me with him where he lived. He asked me to take Sannyas. I said, 'I am a boy. I do not understand Sannyas. My parents are alone. There is no one to take care of them. I shall become a householder and serve them. Thus Lakshmi-Narayana will be pleased.' Then he sent me here and asked me to convey his regards to mother."¹³

Another day Jagannath saw a dream. Narrating the dream to Shachi he said, "I saw that Nimai has taken Sannyas. He always sings and dances and laughs and weeps. Advaitcharya and the other devotees perform *kirtan* round him. Then I saw that he sat on the altar of Vishnu. Four-faced, five-faced and a thousand-faced gods shouted 'Jai Shachinandna!' and sang hymns of praise to him. I was frightened to see them. My throat was choked and I could not speak. Then I saw that Nimai went dancing and singing from one city to another followed by a thousand million

¹³ C. C., 1, 15, 14 - 19.

people, whose shouts of 'Haribol!' rent the sky. Thus he went along with the devotees to Sridham Puri.”¹⁴

After narrating the dream he said, “The dream makes me unhappy. I am afraid that Nimai may also renounce.” Shachi said, “You need not have that fear. Nimai is so much absorbed in learning and derives so much *rasa* from it that he cannot think of renouncing.”¹⁵

Thus they passed their days in suspense and fear, talking always of Nimai. One day Jagannath suddenly left his body.¹⁶

Nimai mourned the death of his father, just as Ram mourned the death of Dashrath. But he soon controlled himself and tried to assuage the grief of his mother. Husband's death after the renunciation of Vishvarup was too much for her to bear. But she also tried to forget it for the sake of Nimai. She concentrated all her attention upon him. Jagannath's family was always poor. But after his death its condition became much worse. Nimai consoled Shachi by saying, “Ma! You will not suffer any want. Even things, which are beyond the reach of Brahma and Mahesha, I shall easily get for you.”

¹⁴ ibid, 1, 8, 96 - 104.

¹⁵ ibid, 106 - 107.

¹⁶ ibid, 109.

KRISHNA'S DONATIONS OF GOLD

Once, when he was going to bathe in the Ganga, he asked Shachi to provide him with garland and other things required for worshipping Ganga. Shachi could not provide immediately perhaps for want of money. If she had told him before, Nimai would certainly have fulfilled her want. Because she did not, he was filled with rage. His rage was not ordinary. It was the rage of Shiva, the god of destruction. He started breaking everything. He broke the earthen pitchers containing water, ghee, oil, rice, pulses and everything else he could lay his hand on.¹⁷ Shachi was terrified. She did not say anything. After sometime, when she had given him the articles for Ganga-puja, he went to the river, bathed and returned. Then he worshipped Vishnu and took his meal. Shachi saw that his rage had subsided. She then said to him, "Darling! You have destroyed everything. Everything is your own. You did not think for a moment what you will eat tomorrow, if you destroy everything." Nimai laughed and said, "Krishna feeds all. He will feed you and me. Why worry?"¹⁸

He said this and went to school. After returning from the school he called Shachi and gave her two *tolas* of gold and said, "Look Ma! Krishna has given this. You have it sold and purchase what you need."¹⁹

¹⁷ C. Bh., 1, 8, 132 - 140.

¹⁸ ibid, 171.

¹⁹ ibid, 175 - 176.

Thus everytime Shachi fell short of money, he brought gold and gave it to her.²⁰ Shachi wondered where he brought it from.

After completing his study of grammar Nimai joined the school of Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya, the famous Naiyayika (logician) for the study of Nyaya (logic). At this school he attracted the attention of Raghunath, the author of the famous book on logic called *Didhiti*. Raghunath became his friend.

NIMAI'S COMMENTARY AND RAGHUNATH

One day Sarvabhaum asked Raghunath to explain a subtle fallacy. It took Raghunath a whole day to arrive at the right answer. He was, therefore, late in cooking his food. Nimai happened to arrive at his place while he was cooking. He said, "Brother! Why are you cooking so late today?" Raghunath replied, "I was busy the whole day in solving a logical fallacy."

"The fallacy must indeed have been too difficult to be solved even by an intellectual giant like you. May I know what it was?" said Nimai with a smile.

Raghu told him the fallacy. Nimai solved it in the twinkling of an eye. Raghu kept gazing at him with bewilderment. This made him realize that Nimai, though much younger to him in age, was not only his friend, but also his rival. He was ambitious. He had

²⁰ ibid, 179.

hoped that he would be recognized as the foremost scholar of Nyaya on account of his *Didhiti*. He feared that his hope might be blasted by Nimai. His fear was strengthened, when he came to know that Nimai was also writing a commentary on Nyaya. He became anxious to see his manuscript. He doubted that Nimai would be generous enough to show it. But when he made the request to Nimai, he readily agreed.

The next day, when they were both crossing the Ganga on a ferry, while going to the *tol*, he read out his commentary to him. He listened with amazement and dismay. The more he heard the more he felt mortified, till at last tears began to trickle down his eyes. Nimai understood what fear was working on his mind. He held his arm and said affectionately, "Brother! Why do you weep?"

Raghunath could not conceal his feeling. He said, "Brother! I cannot hide from you the fear that makes me weep. I had dreamt that my *Didhiti* would be recognized as the foremost work on Nyaya for all times. But my hope is now shattered. Who will care for my commentary, when yours comes out?"

Nimai was moved. He said, "Brother! Is that all? You need not grieve. Here goes this commentary, which makes my friend grieve." As he said this he threw his manuscript into the river. Raghu clasped Nimai and wept. But the tears he now shed were different from the tears he shed before. They were not caused by fear, but by an intense feeling of gratitude towards his

friend, who had made unprecedented sacrifice to remove his fear.

TEACHER NIMAI AND HIS TOL

Nimai was now sixteen years old. He had finished his education and he felt that he was competent enough to run his own *tol*. He opened his *tol* in the spacious *chandi-mandapa* of Mukund Sanjaya and started teaching grammar.

Some scholars believe that Nimai confined himself to the study of grammar, because he studied only grammar under Ganga Das Pandit and taught only grammar in his *tol*.²¹ This is not true. There is evidence to prove that he had acquired proficiency in the other branches of Sanskrit learning as well. We have already stated that he studied Nyaya under Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya and humbled the pride of Raghunath, the author of *Didhiti*, the most famous book on Nyaya. His knowledge of Rhetoric is proved by the fact that, as we shall see later, he vanquished in disputation Keshava Bhatt, a well known scholar by pointing rhetorical flaws in a verse composed by him. His mastery over Vedanta is testified by the fact that he also vanquished in Vedantic disputation Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya and Prakashanand Sarasvati, the foremost

²¹ S.K. De: *Early History of Vaishnav Faith and Movement in Bengal*, pp., 33 - 34.

scholars of Vedanta. Besides Murari Gupt says²² and Sarvabhaum admits²³ that he was well versed in all branches of learning.

Nimai's fame as a scholar and teacher spread far and wide. Students from different parts of the country flocked to his *Tol*.

MARRIAGE WITH LAKSHMI

About this time Nimai was married. It so happened that one day Lakshmi, the daughter of Vallabhacharya went to Ganga with her Sakhis to bathe. Nimai was there at that time. Vrindavan Das says "Gaur Sundar (Nimai) and Lakshmi saw each other and recognized each other as husband and wife since eternity. Gaur Sundar smiled to see her and she in her mind bowed down to him."²⁴

As Providence would have it, the same day a Brahmin named Banamali went to Shachi, may be at the instance of Vallabhacharya, and said, "Your son Gaur Sundara has come of age and needs to be married. Lakshmi, the daughter of Vallabhacharya, is also of marriageable age. She is beautiful and qualified in all respects to be the bride of Gaur. You may accept her if you like."²⁵ Shachi said, "My son is young. Let

²² Kadacha, 8, 12.

²³ C. Bh., 1, 3, 82.

²⁴ C. Bh., 1, 10, 50 - 52.

²⁵ ibid, 1, 10, 53 - 57.

him grow older and wiser. Till then he can wait for marriage.”²⁶

Banamali returned. On the way he met Nimai. Nimai asked him where he had gone. He replied, “I had gone to your mother to propose your marriage with Lakshmi, the daughter of Vallabhacharya. But she was indifferent.” Nimai laughed. When he reached home, he said to Shachi with a smile, “Ma! Acharya Banamali came to you. Why did you not treat him well?” Shachi took the hint. She called Banamali and asked him to go ahead with his proposal and get it executed.²⁷

On an auspicious day Nimai was married. The bride and the bride-groom came home accompanied by musicians playing different kinds of musical instrument. Those who saw the couple kept on looking at them, as if bound by a spell. They said, “We never saw such a couple before.” Some said, “They look like Lakshmi-Narayana Themselves.” Some said, “They are Sita and Ram.” Some said, “They are Rati and Madan.”²⁸

There was no end to the happiness of mother Shachi. For the first time after the disappearance of Jagannath Mishra she felt so happy. The entrance of Lakshmi in her house seemed to bring a complete change in her life and environment. Her poverty was

²⁶ ibid, 58.

²⁷ ibid, 65 -66.

²⁸ ibid, 114 - 116.

over.²⁹ She was bewildered sometimes to see by the side of her son a flame of light instead of Lakshmi. Sometimes she felt that her house was filled with the fragrance of lotus.³⁰ She soon realized that it was all due to her daughter-in-law, who was no other than a partial manifestation of Kamala, the wife of Narayana.³¹

INTELLECTUAL BOUTS

Nimai was now a householder and a teacher of repute. But he had not yet outgrown his boyishness. He used to be serious while teaching in the *tol*. But after the *tol* he played with his students in the streets of Nadiya and on the *ghatas* of Ganga.

If, in course of his ramblings, Nimai came across any Pandita, he entered into discussion with him on some problem relating to the particular subject, in which he had specialised, and humbled his pride by his superior knowledge and intelligence. Even the most learned Pandits quailed before him and tried to avoid him as far as they could. Thus, Vrindavan Das Thakur says, "The Lord of Sarasvati roamed about in Navadvip with Sarasvati in his hand in the form of a book.³² The people recognized Him, yet recognized not.³³ They only wondered whether he was human."

²⁹ ibid, 126 -127.

³⁰ ibid, 123 - 124.

³¹ ibid, 125 - 126.

³² C. Bh., 1, 11, 6.

³³ ibid, 1, 11, 14.

Though there were many among the Pandits, who admired and respected him, there were some, who were jealous of him and talked ill of him behind his back. They said to one another, "Nimai is learned, but proud and arrogant. God cannot tolerate this. He is bound to come to grief some day. He is only the son of Jagannath Mishra, who could hardly provide him two square meals a day. But the fellow now seems to roll in wealth and roams about in the streets of Nadiya dressed in choicest silk like a prince." But even they could not venture to say anything on his face. All the other people of Navadvip regarded Nimai as the crest-jewel of the Pandits of Navadvip and were proud of him. They respected him so much that they could not cross him on the way without making obeisance to him. Even the rich and the most influential people of Nadiya, who rode on horses, got down from the horse-back to pay respects to him, if they happened to see him.

But his attitude towards the Vaishnavs was peculiar. He loved them at heart, but they were the principal targets of his literary disputations. They regretted that he wasted his time in learning and talking on literary subjects and never talked of Krishna and Krishna-*bhakti*.³⁴ They always tried to avoid him lest he might engage them in a literary discussion.

³⁴ ibid, 35.

In Navadvip there lived a Vaishnav named Mukund Datta. He was a good singer. He sang regularly in the assembly of Vaishnavs at the house of Advaitcharya. As he sang the songs of Krishna, the Vaishnavs were so overwhelmed with *bhav* that they wept and laughed, danced and rolled on the ground.³⁵ Nimai always felt happy to see him, but did not let him go without having a literary bout with him.

One day, when Pandit Nimai was going somewhere with his students and friends, he saw Mukund, who was going to bathe in the Ganga, change his path to avoid him. Nimai said to Govind, one of his companions, "Why did the fellow turn away from me?"

Govind said, "Probably he was not going to Ganga, but elsewhere for some work."

Nimai said, "I know why he turned. He does not like my company, He keeps away from me because I am not a Vaishnav. I only read the Shastras and discuss their commentary, while he reads and practises them. Let me see how long the fellow avoids me. It will not be long, when he will see that I become a Vaishnav, at whose door even the Vaishnavs like Brahma and Shiva will come and sit. All those who now avoid me, will glorify me."³⁶

³⁵ C. Bh., 1, 11, 24 - 26.

³⁶ ibid, 41 - 49.

MEETING ISHVAR PURI

Immediately after this, it seems, Yogamaya began to make things move towards the fulfillment of the prophecy of her Lord. There came to Navadvip Ishvar Puri, the famous disciple of Madhavendra Puri, who was later to become his guru. He was so humble in appearance and demeanour that no one could recognize him.³⁷

One day he went to the house of Advaitcharya and sat humbly and hesitatingly, where Advaitcharya was worshipping the deity. Advaitcharya felt attracted towards him to see a divine lustre on his face. He said, "Maharaj! You look like a Vaishnav Sannyasi. May I know who you are?"³⁸

Ishvar Puri said out of utter humility, "I am too lowly a person. I have come for your *darshan*."³⁹

Mukund was there at that time. He saw the meeting of the two great Vaishnavs and was inspired to sing a Krishna-song. As soon as he sang *Astasattvika bhav*s appeared on the body of Ishvar Puri and he began to roll on the ground. Advaitcharya took him in his lap and began to caress him. Mukund raised the pitch of the song. Still his *bhav* could not be controlled. It went on increasing. After a long time he became normal. He was recognized as the great saint

³⁷ ibid, 70 - 71.

³⁸ ibid, 74 - 75.

³⁹ ibid, 76.

Ishvar Puri by Advaitacharya and his companions. He remained unknown to the people outside. He roamed about in the streets of Nadiya as an ordinary pilgrim. Once he happened to meet Gaur Sundar, when he was returning home from his *tol*. Vrindavan Das says, "The Lord recognized him as his servant, who was to play the part of His guru in this Lila. Therefore he made obeisance to him.⁴⁰ Ishvar Puri was amazed to see his supernatural beauty and the signs of Siddha Mahapurusha on his body. He said to him, "Brahmin Kumar! What is your name? Where do you read?" The people around him said, "He is Nimai Pandit." "Oh, Nimai Pandit!" exclaimed Ishvar Puri with joy, since he had heard a great deal about him.⁴¹

No one knows what transpired in the mind of Nimai to see the old Vaishnav, he invited him to dinner at his place. Ishvar Puri dined with pleasure, then sat down to talk with him about Krishna. As he talked, he was overwhelmed with *bhav* and tears of *Krishna-prem* profusely rolled down his eyes.⁴² Nimai was influenced. He went to see him every day at the house of Gopinath Acharya, where he stayed for a month.⁴³

One day Ishvar Puri said to him, "Nimai, you are a Pandit. I have written a book called *Krishna-lilamrita*. I wish that you go through it and let me

⁴⁰ C. Bh., 1, 11, 86.

⁴¹ ibid, 89 - 91.

⁴² ibid, 94 - 95.

⁴³ ibid, 96 - 97.

know if you find a fault anywhere." Nimai said, "Krishna is pleased with whatever the devotee writes in love. He does not consider the faults. The illiterate says *Vishnaya*, the pandit says *Vishnave*. Krishna accepts both, He cares for *bhav*, not the language. You have written the book with love and devotion. Who can have the courage to find fault with it?"⁴⁴

Ishvar Puri was pleased. "Still," he said with a smile, "if you find any fault, let me know. You will not commit any offence thereby."

One day Nimai pointed out a mistake in his work with regard to the use of a verb. He said, "This verb should not be used in *atmanepada* form. This led to some discussion. Ishvar Puri had to accept his defeat. But he was a learned man. The next day he gathered his wits to prove that the verb could be used in that form. Vrindavan Das says that Lord Vishvambhar was then pleased, He did not press his point, because He had recognized him as His servant and He derived greater satisfaction from His servant's victory over Him than from His victory over the servant.⁴⁵

Thus Ishvar Puri lived in Navadvip for sometime. Then he went elsewhere, because it was not his habit to stay long at one place.

⁴⁴ ibid, 105 - 110.

⁴⁵ ibid, 120.

NIMAI AND THE VAISHNAVAS

One day during his ramblings in the city with his students Nimai met Mukund. He held him by the hand and said, "Mukund! You ran away from me that day. I shall not leave you today. I shall have a literary bout with you to see what kind of a Pandit you are. Many in Nadiya pass as pandits, whose knowledge is too shallow."

Mukund felt very much embarrassed. There was no way of escape for him. Therefore he decided to face Nimai firmly. He thought that Nimai was proficient in grammar, therefore he would not discuss with him grammar but poetics and so humble his pride that he would not challenge him again. So he said, "Nimai! I am ready for a fight. But I do not like to discuss grammar. That is the game of children. I would rather discuss *alamkar* (poetics), if you are willing."⁴⁶

Nimai said, "Very well. Ask me any question you like."

Mukund put forth for discussion some of the most difficult problems of *alamkar*. Nimai criticised whatever Mukund said about them and stated his own view point, which Mukund found it impossible to refute. Nimai laughed and said jarringly, "Pandit! Go home and read the books carefully. Come again tomorrow, if you like, after you have learnt more."

⁴⁶ C. Bh., 1, 12, 11 - 12.

Mukund could not say anything. He took the dust of Nimai's feet with reverence and went home, thinking what a prodigy was Nimai. There was no subject of which he was not the master. Was it possible for a human to have all the knowledge he had? He regretted, however, that he was not a Krishna-bhakta and thought that if he became a Krishna-bhakta, he would, instead of avoiding his company not leave his company even for a moment.⁴⁷

Every day in the evening Pandit Nimai went to the bank of Ganga and sat there surrounded by his students, like a golden moon, surrounded by stars, thrilling everyone, who saw or heard him by his extraordinary beauty and ambrosial talks. The women thought he was no other than Madan, the god of love and beauty, the pandits thought he was Vrihaspati; the yogis thought he was a *siddha* Mahayogi.⁴⁸ Many people came to the Ganga-ghats in the evening. They thronged round him. But the Vaishnavs sat at a distance and enjoyed his learned talks and discourses. They did not come near him for fear of being engaged in literary discussion, devoid of Bhakti, which they despised. They said, "What is the value of his extraordinary beauty, intelligence and learning without Bhakti?" They prayed, "O Krishna! Be merciful to us. Give the son of Jagannath Your Bhakti so that he worships You always and gives up for good his literary pursuits and we are

⁴⁷ ibid, 17 - 19.

⁴⁸ C. Bh., 1, 12, 57 - 59.

blessed by his company.”⁴⁹ Some said to him directly, “Look Nimai Pandit, people read and learn in order that they may have Krishna-*bhakti*. What is the use of learning, if you do not have Bhakti?” Nimai laughed and said, “I shall be fortunate, if you teach me Krishna-*bhakti*. After teaching students for some more time I shall learn Bhakti from you Vaishnavs.”⁵⁰

SPORT AND SQUABBLES WITH VENDORS

One trait of Nimai’s character, which came into light at this time, was the easy familiarity he developed with non-Brahmins and men of professional castes like weavers, milk-men and gardeners and had jokes and squabbles of love with them. In his random wanderings with his students in the streets of Nadiya he went to their shops pretending as a customer and took away the commodities they sold without paying the price after joking and squabbling in his peculiar loving manner.

He would go to a weaver and say, “Show me some fine cloth.” The weaver would bow down respectfully and bring the cloth. Nimai would ask for the price. He would say, “Thakur! It is my good luck that you have come to me. What price? You pay what you like.” But the Thakur would say, “I have no money

⁴⁹ ibid, 43 - 44.

⁵⁰ ibid, 49 - 52.

to pay just now." The weaver would then be pleased to give away the cloth on indefinite credit.⁵¹

He would go to the locality where milk-men lived. The milk-men would be happy to see him. They would call him 'uncle' and entertain him with milk, curd and butter.⁵² After having some fun with them, he would go to the *gandh-banik* (scent vendor) and say, "Banik! Show me some excellent scent." The Banik would make obeisance at his feet and bring the choicest scent he had. Nimai Pandit would inquire about the price. He would reply, "What price shall I say? I apply the scent to your body. If you find the smell even after bathing tomorrow, you may pay what you like." So saying the fortunate Banik would apply the scent to his body with his own hands. He would bless the Banik with a smile and walk away.⁵³ Similarly he would go to the gardener, the betel-vendor and others and bless them by accepting their offerings. Some vendors would themselves invite him to purchase things from them. They would enjoy squabbling with him regarding the price of the things they sold and consider themselves blessed by giving them away without price at the end.

WRANGLES WITH SHRIDHARA

His most favorite pastime was to wrangle with Sridhar, a poor but highly devoted vendor, who chanted

⁵¹ ibid, 108 - 112.

⁵² ibid, 113 - 121.

⁵³ ibid, 112 - 128.

Harinam all day and night and eked out his meager living by selling banana leaves and *thod*.⁵⁴ When he went to the house of Sridhar, Sridhar respectfully made obeisance to him and gave him *asan* to sit. He said to him one day, "Sridhar! You chant Harinam all the time and worship Lakshmi-Narayana, still your condition is so miserable. You cannot even eat and dress properly."

Sridhar said, "I do not have to go without food, nor do I remain naked. Good or bad, I have some kind of dress to cover my body well."

"But I see so many knots in the clothes you wear and so many holes in the thatched roof of your house. Don't you see that people, who worship Chandi, are so well off and live so luxuriously?"

"You are right Thakur. But you see the King lives in palace and eats and dresses luxuriously, while the bird lives on trees and eats whatever it gets. Still Kala treats them equally. Both die and have to enjoy or suffer according to their deeds."⁵⁵

Nimai then, pretending to be somewhat serious, said quietly in his ear, "Look, Sridhar, I know that you have a treasure, (*prem-bhakti*), which you keep concealed. I shall, after sometime, disclose that secret

⁵⁴ The inner portion of banana tree, which the Bengalis eat as vegetable.

⁵⁵ ibid, 188 - 190.

to everyone. Then you will not be able to deceive people any more by living outwardly like a destitute.”⁵⁶

Sridhar got exasperated and said, “Pandit! You go your way. It does not behoove you to wrangle unnecessarily with me.”⁵⁷

Nimai Pandit said, “I will not leave easily. Tell me at once how much of that treasure you will give me.”⁵⁸

“What can I give Pandit, a poor vendor that I am, earning my living by selling banana leaves?”

“Alright. You keep your hidden treasure for the present. I shall share it with you later. Just now you give me only banana, *thod* and leaves every day without price. Then I will not squabble with you any more.”⁵⁹

Sridhar was in a quandary. He could not give banana etc. every day. He could not also displease the Pandit, who was so turbulent. He knew that if he did not give, he would snatch as he some times did. Ultimately he made up his mind and said, “Very well Pandit, I shall give you banana, *thod* and leaves every day. You will not have to pay any price. But you will not wrangle with me any more.”

⁵⁶ ibid, 191 -192.

⁵⁷ ibid, 193.

⁵⁸ ibid, 194.

⁵⁹ ibid, 196 -197.

"That's right Sridhar. No more wrangling with you now. But tell me one thing and then I go. Tell me who, you think, I am."

"You are a Brahamin, part and parcel of Vishnu," said Sridhar.

"No, I am a cowherd, though you see me as a Brahamin."⁶⁰

Nimai Pandit laughed, became, as Vrindavan Das says, Sridhar could still not recognize the Lord.⁶¹

As if to give a further hint to Sridhar the gracious and frolicsome Lord said, "Sridhar! Don't you know that the importance of Ganga, you worship, is due to me."⁶²

Still Sridhar said, "Pandit! You utter such blasphemous words. Are you not afraid of Ganga? People become serious as they grow in age. But I find that you are the same flippant as you were ten years before."

The Lord smiled within Himself at the admonition of His own servant.

ASTROLOGER'S PREDICAMENT

One day Pandit Nimai went to the house of an astrologer, who was known as Sarvajna. (One, who

⁶⁰ ibid, 208.

⁶¹ ibid, 209.

⁶² ibid, 210.

knows everything). He was a devotee of Bala-gopal, with Whose help he could say everything about anyone's present, past or future. Pandit Nimai said to him, "You are supposed to know everything. Would you tell me what I was in my past lives?"⁶³

The Sarvajna began to do the *japa* (silent repetition) of Gopal Mantra and meditate. He saw the four-armed form of Bhagavan with conch, discus, club and lotus in His hands being worshipped in prison by His parents. Immediately after he saw the father carrying his son to Gokula. Then he saw in place of the four-armed child, the two armed naked Bala-gopal with a jingling ornament round His waist and butter in His hand, and then the youthful Krishna standing twisted thrice and holding the flute in His hand.⁶⁴

The Sarvajna was surprised. He opened his eyes, looked attentively at Pandit Nimai and again closed his eyes and began to meditate and say in prayer to Gopal, "Bala-gopal! Show me what this Brahmin was in his past lives." Then he saw one after the other Ram, Baraha, Nrisimha, Bamaṇa, Matsya and Jagannath with Balaram and Subhadra.⁶⁵

The Sarvajna was even more surprised and confused. He began to think that perhaps the Brahmin Pandit, who knew some Mantra, or a god in his form

⁶³ C. Bh., 1, 12, 155.

⁶⁴ ibid, 157 - 162.

⁶⁵ ibid, 164 - 172.

had come to slight him. Then the Lord smiled and said, "Sarvajna! What do you think? Why not tell me what I was in my past lives?" The Sarvajna replied, "You may go just now. I shall do some more *japa* and then in the evening I shall tell you everything."⁶⁶

The Lord said, "Very well, very well" and came away smiling.⁶⁷

SHACHI'S BEWILDERMENT

Pandit Nimai of Nadiya was the Krishna of Vrindavan. His Vrindavan-*rup* (form) was covered by his Nadiya-*rupa*. In Vrindavan He was the fluteplayer, Who always revelled with the gopis. In Nadiya he was the Pandit, who enjoyed literary pursuits and disputations with pandits. But the Vrindavan-*rup* could not be completely covered by the Nadiya-*rupa*. It had the natural tendency to shine from behind. It tried in different ways to make the devotees like Sridhar and the Sarvajna realize it. But they could not on account of the influence of Yogamaya, whose responsibility it was to see that the Nadiya-lila went on as the Lord had desired in His heart, and it could not go on, if the screen was lifted.

In the case of Shachi Vrindavan-lila played hide and seek from the infancy of Nimai and was playing even now. One day Vrindavan-*bhav* was revived in Nimai on seeing the full moon and he began to blow

⁶⁶ ibid, 173 - 176.

⁶⁷ ibid, 177.

the flute.⁶⁸ Shachi heard the sound of the flute and swooned. On regaining consciousness she began to hear the sound again. The sound seemed to come from where Nimai was sitting. She came out of her room to see him. The sound stopped, but she was surprised to see the moon in the heart of Nimai.⁶⁹

In this way sometimes at night she heard the sound of different kinds of musical instruments and feet in dancing motion, as if Rasa-lila was going on. Sometimes she saw divine female forms like Lakshmi, each with a lotus in her hand and sometimes celestial beings like gods shedding supernatural light from their bodies. They only appeared and disappeared.⁷⁰ Shachi was bewildered. She could not understand that they were due to the Lord playing as her son. Vrindavan Das says that this was all due to the sportiveness of the sports-maniac Nimai.⁷¹

ASSURANCE TO SRIVAS

One day when Pandit Nimai, dressed as prince and chewing betel, was moving about in the streets of Nadiya in his usual lordly manner with six or seven students, he happened to meet Srivas Pandit, an old friend of his father and second in importance only to

⁶⁸ C. Bh., 1, 12, 215 - 216.

⁶⁹ ibid, 221,

⁷⁰ ibid, 226 - 229.

⁷¹ ibid, 234 - 235.

Advaitcharya amongst the Vaishnavs. He made obeisance to him respectfully. Srivas laughed to see him. He gave him his blessing and said, "Mischief monger! Where are you going? You are wasting your time in scholastic pursuits. It is good that you have become a pandit, but what is the use of your learning, if you do not have Bhakti. Bhakti is the end; learning is only a means to Bhakti. Your learning is complete. You should now turn to Bhakti."⁷²

The Lord smiled and said, "Listen Pandit! By your grace so it will be."⁷³

FIT OF DIVINE MADNESS

There was yet time for the assurance given by Pandit Nimai to Srivas to be fulfilled. But it was perhaps to give a proof of his desire to fulfill the assurance given to him, or to assure the Vaishnavs, who wished him to be a Vaishnav, or to fulfill His own inward desire as Bhagavan incarnated as Bhakta, to manifest Himself as such, which had remained restrained so far, that he dived for a while into the ocean of Bhakti. He was overtaken by a strong *bhav*-current, which resulted in a fit of divine madness. He laughed and wept and rolled on the ground. He roared or spoke in words, which no one could understand. He sometimes swooned or fell into stupor and sometimes ran.

⁷² ibid, 242 - 252.

⁷³ ibid, 253.

Sometimes his entire body shook with terrible tremor, sometimes it was covered with horripilation all over.⁷⁴ Sometimes he shouted, "I am the Lord of the universe. My name is Vishvambhar (the upholder of the universe). I uphold the universe. But no one recognizes Me."⁷⁵

Vrindavan Das says that in this way the Lord wanted to manifest Himself, but no one could understand Him on account of Maya.⁷⁶ Some thought that he had gone mad; some thought he was possessed by an evil spirit; some thought that the malady was due to excessive strain on the mind on account of his over-indulgence in teaching and other literary activities.

The *bhav*, however, did not last long. It subsided or was withdrawn by the Lord to see the anxiety it caused to Mother Shachi and the Vaishnavs.⁷⁷

CONQUEST OF THE WORLD CONQUEROR⁷⁸

Nimai Pandit had now firmly established himself as the crest-jewel of the pandits of Nadiya. There were thousands of pandits in Navadvip. Each claimed to be superior to the rest. But there was none whose pride

⁷⁴ C. Bh., 1, 12, 67 - 70.

⁷⁵ ibid, 76 - 77.

⁷⁶ ibid, 78.

⁷⁷ ibid, 84.

⁷⁸ According to C.C. this episode took place after the marriage with Vishnupriya.

Nimai had not shattered. Everyone quailed in his presence. Everyone made obeisance to him, when he saw him, but meekly and quickly passed away for fear of being challenged by him for a literary combat, which was now a favourite game for him. Every one was convinced that he was not human, but no one could understand, who he was. Such was the inconceivable power of his Maya.

It was at this time that there came to Navadvip a pandit, who was called *digvijayi* or world conqueror, because he had vanquished in literary combats the topmost pandits of every part of the country except Navadvip. He knew that he could retain his title as *digvijayi* only if he defeated the pandits of Navadvip, the highest seat of learning at that time. He was confident of his victory, because he had pleased by worship Sarasvati, the goddess of learning and had obtained from her the boon that no one would be able to defeat him in a literary disputation. Sarasvati herself sat on his tongue in such disputations and made him invincible.⁷⁹ Therefore he entered Navadvip seated, in his pride, on the back of an elephant and followed by his admirers and attendants, and blowing the trumpet of his victories.⁸⁰

The arrival of the *Digvijayi* caused a shiver in Navadvip. No one had the courage to face him. It was

⁷⁹ C. Bh., 1, 13, 20 - 2.

⁸⁰ ibid, 40.

a matter of shame for the pandits of Navadvip. The reputation of Navadvip as the highest seat of learning was at stake. The pandits conferred among themselves. Something had to be done to save the glory of Navadvip. But they did not know what to do. Someone said, "May be Nimai Pandit can save the honour of Navadvip." Others said, "What can Nimai Pandit do? How can he vanquish Sarasvati, who sits on the tongue of the Digvijayi and fights his battles?" The adversaries of Nimai Pandit were happy. They said, "At last the time has come, when the proud Nimai will have to eat a humble pie and climb down from the pinnacle of glory on which he now sits and mocks on all of us. He will no more stroll and strut on the streets of Nadiya as the great and the invincible Pandit-raj (King of Pandits)."

The students of Nimai Pandit reported everything to him. They said, "Prabhu! A pandit, who has the boon of Sarasvati, has come to Navadvip. He is going about on an elephant with his entourage, challenging everyone to prove his superiority by defeating him in a literary disputation or admit defeat in writing. No one has the courage to face him." Prabhu smiled and said, "Look, our Lord does not tolerate the superciliousness or vain glory of a person. It is well known how He demolished the pride of Ravan, Vana and Mahusa. You will see that his pride also is soon shattered."⁸¹

⁸¹ ibid, 45 - 48.

In the evening Nimai Prabhu went to the bank of Ganga, made obeisance to the river, took its water upon his head and sat down on the *ghat* surrounded by his pupils. While talks on Shastras and repartees were going on, he was thinking within his mind about the manner in which to shatter the pride of the Digvijayi pandit. Probably since he was a devotee of Sarasvati, he did not like that he should be worsted publicly in a regular assembly of the pandits of Navadvip. If that was done, he would have a sudden fall from the mount of glory on which he sat proudly. That would be worse than death for him. He thought that if he was worsted informally in a casual meeting somewhere, he would not be publicly disgraced.⁸² He was thinking like this, when, after nightfall, in the light of the full-moon the Digvijayi was seen strolling happily on the bank.⁸³ He saw from a distance the golden figure of Nimai Pandit shining in moon-light amidst a crowd of students, looking at him and drinking deep of the nectar of learning pouring from his mouth. The Digvijayi felt attracted and drew closer, but, remaining still at some distance, began to enjoy his beauty and the superhuman skill with which, in his discourse on the Shastras, he was smilingly and convincingly proving the right as wrong and the wrong as right.⁸⁴ He thought that perhaps he was Nimai Pandit, about whose reputation

⁸² ibid, 53 - 57.

⁸³ ibid, 58.

⁸⁴ ibid, 67.

he had heard even before coming to Navadvip. He asked one of the students, "Who is he?" "Nimai Pandit," was the reply. Then he came nearer. Nimai Pandit welcomed him with a smile and with due respect made him sit by his side.

After exchanging a few words with the Digvijayi Nimai said, "Pandit-raj! I have heard that you are gifted with the power to instantaneously compose and recite verses on anything. Would you kindly recite some verses in glorification of Ganga, the destroyer of all sins, so that our hearts are purified?"

The pandit was only waiting for an opportunity to exhibit his extraordinary power of versification. He was happy to hear this and started reciting Shloks on Ganga extempore. With terrific thunder and speed he went on reciting one Shlok after another. In a single breath he recited one hundred *shloks*. The students were stupefied, but not Pandit Nimai. The *shloks* contained many words, which it was difficult even for pandits, well versed in all the Shastra, to understand.⁸⁵

Nimai Pandit admired the Shloks. He said, "You are the best poet in this world. There is no one, who can compare with you, no one, who can even understand the verses composed by you. You alone know their meaning or Sarasvati. If you kindly explain the meaning of one of the Shloks recited by you we shall be happy."⁸⁶

⁸⁵ ibid, 87.

⁸⁶ C. C., 1, 16, 35 - 37.

“Tell me which Shlok I should explain,” said the Digvijayi.

Nimai Pandit then recited one of the hundred shloks recited by Digvijayi and asked him to explain the same. The Digvijayi was surprised. He said, “I recited the Shloks one after the other with the speed of tempest. How could you remember a Shlok uttered in the middle of the recitation?”

Nimai Pandit said with a smile, “There is nothing in this to be surprised at. Just as you have pleased the goddess and have from her the gift of poetry, some have from her the gift of memory.”⁸⁷

Digvijayi then explained the meaning of the Shlok. Nimai Pandit said, “Now kindly tell us about the merits and demerits of the Shlok.”

Digvijayi said, “There are no demerits or faults in it. It is full of many qualities deserving praise like, for example, similes and alliteration.”

Then Prabhu said, “If you do not mind, I may point out the faults. The Shlok is no doubt full of merits. But if you examine closely, you will find both merits and demerits.”⁸⁸

The Digvijayi pandit then fumed with rage. He said, “The Shlok is flawless. You do not understand it. How can you as a mere grammarian, who has never read *alamkar* (rhetorics)?”⁸⁹

⁸⁷ C. C., 1, 16, 35 - 41.

⁸⁸ C. C., 1, 16, 44 - 46.

⁸⁹ ibid, 46 - 47.

Prabhu said, "Revered pandit! It is true that I cannot understand your Shlok, because I have not read *alamkar*. You may yourself, therefore, let me know the merits and demerits of the Shlok. I have not read *alamkar*, but I have heard a little bit from those, who have read it. Therefore it appears to me that the Shlok has many demerits, just as it has many merits. You may kindly let me know whether I am right or wrong."⁹⁰

The pandit said, "Well, well, let me know what merits and demerits you find in it." Prabhu said, "In your Shlok there are five merits and five demerits." I am going to point them out one by one." Prabhu then pointed out the merits as well as demerits.

Digvijayi was stunned. He wanted to say something but could not. He felt that he had suddenly become intellectually bankrupt. He had never suffered defeat. Since he was defeated by a lad, still of school-going age, he thought that it was all due to the anger of Sarasvati. She herself sat on the tongue of Nimai, otherwise how could he defeat him. It was not possible for a human being to make the comments he made.⁹¹

Therefore, collecting himself a little, he said, "Nimai Pandit! I am amazed to hear your commentary. You read neither Alamkara nor the Shastras. How then could you make such wonderful comments?"⁹²

⁹⁰ ibid, 48 - 49.

⁹¹ ibid, 81 - 84.

⁹² C. C., 1, 16, 85 - 86.

Prabhu replied in a pretentious manner, "I do not know what is right or wrong according to the Shastras. I spoke only what Sarasvati made me speak."⁹³

This confirmed Digvijayi's belief that it was Sarasvati, who made him suffer defeat at the hands of a young pandit, who was but a child before him. He decided to complain to her in *japa* and meditation and ask why she insulted him like that.⁹⁴

The pupils, however, rejoiced at his having been worsted by their teacher. They laughed and clapped. But when forbidden by Prabhu they stopped laughing.

Prabhu realized that Digvijayi was very much hurt at heart. To pacify him he said, "Pandit-raj! Do not take me amiss. I do not want to minimise your importance as a pandit. You are undoubtedly the greatest pandit, the crest-jewel of pandits and poets. Poetry flows from your mouth as Gange flows from the Himalayas. I do not know of any other poet as gifted as you. I do not give much importance to the flaws I found in your Shlok. Even the poetry of Bhavabhuti, Jayadev and Kalidas has its faults. That does not in any way minimise the importance of your compositions. You should not take to heart the faults I pointed out in my childishness. I am a small fry before you. Even your pupils are more qualified than me. You may kindly excuse me for my arrogance. Now night has darkened and you are tired after reciting the

⁹³ ibid, 87 - 88,

⁹⁴ ibid, 89 - 90.

Shloks at length. You may go home and rest. Tomorrow I shall hear more from you about the Shastras.”⁹⁵

Digvijayi was mollified a little. But his vanity did not go. He began to think, ‘Sarasvati gave me a boon on account of which I became invincible. Whatever the branch of learning, in which a pandit had achieved the highest proficiency, he was always defeated by me. But I stand defeated today by a boy, who knows only Vyakarana (grammar), the Shastra for children. I do not know whether it is because even Sarasvti’s boon may at times prove ineffective or because she is angry with me, on account of some offence committed by me, that I have been defeated. I shall inquire of her.’

Digvijayi was sad and crestfallen. He went where he was staying. For a long time he did the *japa* of Sarasvati Mantra and slept. Sarasvati appeared to him in a dream and said, “The One, at Whose hands you have suffered defeat, is no other than Mahaprabhu, the Lord of Lords. He is also my Lord. I bow before Him. I always sit on your tongue. But I lose my Shakti in His presence. Not to speak of me, even the thousand-faced Ananta, Who with His thousand tongues always recites the Vedas, becomes speechless in His presence. He is the source of all Avatars. It is He, Who appeared as Nrisimha to protect Prahalad, He Who appeared as Ram and killed Ravana, He Who appeared as the son of Vasudev and Nand. He has now appeared as the Son of a Brahmin and is

⁹⁵ ibid, 93 - 98.

enjoying the Rasa of learning as a Pandit. The fruit of the *japa* of my Mantra, you have done so long, is not your position as Digvijayi Pandit, but the *darshan* of the Lord, with which you have been blessed. Even the Vedas do not know the secret of this Avatara. How can they know until he chooses to make it known. I have *told* you the secret because of your devotion to me and the Mantra of which you have done the *japa*. Now go at once and surrender yourself at the feet of the Lord.”⁹⁶

It was early in the morning, when the Digvijayi woke up from the dream. Immediately he went to Pandit Nimai and fell at his feet.⁹⁷ Nimai Pandit lifted and hugged him and said, “Why Pandit? Why do you do that?”

“To have your mercy,” replied the pandit.⁹⁸

“You are *digvijayi* pandit. I am a nonentity before you. Is it proper for you to behave like this towards me?” Digvijayi said, “Listen Pandit-raj. You cannot now hide yourself from me. I know that You are no other than Narayana, the Lord of Sarasvati, as she *told* me. It is my good luck that I came to Navadvip and had Your *darshan*. I have so far been wandering about aimlessly and beating the drum of my learning under the influence of Maya. Now I surrender myself to You.

⁹⁶ C. Bh., 1, 13, 127 - 148.

⁹⁷ ibid, 151.

⁹⁸ ibid, 151.

Kindly advise what I should do for my deliverance from the bondage of Maya.”⁹⁹

Pandit-raj Nimai said, “Listen pandit, you are very fortunate because Sarasvati sits on your tongue. But you should know that Vidya (learning), which aims at conquering the world is not Vidya. Real Vidya is that which results in Bhakti. It is Bhakti alone that will go with you, when you leave the body, neither learning, nor wealth, nor anything else. Therefore you should cultivate Bhakti as long as you live.”¹⁰⁰ Prabhu or Mahaprabhu (the Lord of the Lords), as Sarasvati called Him, then embraced him lovingly. Vrindavan Das says that the Lord of Vaikunth thus by His embrace delivered the pandit from bondage for ever.¹⁰¹ He then warned the Digvijayi that he must not reveal to anyone what Sarasvati had said about Him.¹⁰²

Digvijayi made repeated obeisances to the Lord and rolled at His feet. He was now a changed man. The Lord had by His mere embrace filled his heart with *prem-bhakti*, *vairagya* and the knowledge of all transcendental things.¹⁰³ The man, who till now sat on the highest peak of the mountain of vanity had suddenly become as humble as a blade of grass. The golden shackles of wealth, name and fame; which

⁹⁹ ibid, 155 - 169.

¹⁰⁰ ibid, 172 - 179.

¹⁰¹ ibid, 181.

¹⁰² ibid, 183 - 184.

¹⁰³ ibid, 187.

Maya had bound him with, suddenly became loose and he decided to throw them away. He gave away his palanquin, elephants, horses and everything else to those, who needed them, and bade farewell to his attendants. He became a recluse and began to live alone in seclusion, swimming always in the ocean of *prem-bhakti*.¹⁰⁴

Vrindavan Das Thakur says, "This is what the Lord invariably does, when He is pleased with a devotee. He divests him of his power and pelf and makes him a beggar. A man aspires after the pleasures of this world only so long as he has not tasted the bliss of Bhakti."¹⁰⁵

NIMAI IS CALLED MAHAPRABHU

The people of Nadiya were wonder-struck when they came to know about the victory of Pandit Nimai over the world-conqueror pandit. They were also happy beyond measure, because he had saved the honour of Nadiya. Some said that he had fully justified his pride of learning. Some said that people of Nadiya should confer upon him the title *Vadi-sinha*, (a lion amongst debaters).¹⁰⁶ But no one could recognize Him as the Lord of Lords, even though He had defeated the Digvijayi and baffled through him the goddess

¹⁰⁴ ibid, 187 - 190.

¹⁰⁵ ibid, 191 - 194.

¹⁰⁶ ibid, 203.

Sarasvati, by making her boon ineffective. Such was the power of His Maya.¹⁰⁷

Since, however, Sarasvati called him Mahaprabhu, (the great Lord or the Lord of Lords), we may also from now on call him 'Mahaprabhu'.

MAHAPRABHU AS HOUSEHOLDER

Mahaprabhu's esteem as a pandit was already high, but with the conquest of Digvijayi, his esteem rose so high that he began to be universally recognized as the crest-jewel of the pandits of Nadiya. Even the richest and the most influential people of Navadvip, got down from their palanquin to pay respects to him.¹⁰⁸ No one in Navadvip, who had a ceremony at his house, whether religious or non-religious, regarded it as complete until suitable offerings of various kind, that he could afford, were sent to him, as if he was the presiding deity of Navadvip.¹⁰⁹ But he never touched them. He gave them away to the poor.¹¹⁰ His house became a home of charity for the poor. It also became a regular home for the service of the Sadhus and Sannyasis, towards whom his hospitality was proverbial. Even if twenty Sadhus came at a time and wanted to be fed, they did not have to return. He

¹⁰⁷ ibid, 200 - 204.

¹⁰⁸ ibid, 1, 14, 7 - 8.

¹⁰⁹ ibid, 10.

¹¹⁰ ibid, 11 - 12.

immediately called Shachi and asked her to cook for them. If by chance provisions in the house were not enough for twenty, she did not say anything to Nimai, because she knew that provisions would come from somewhere in time, as they always did.¹¹¹ She then asked Lakshmi to cook. Lakshmi happily cooked alone for all the twenty Sadhus. She did not let Shachi do anything.¹¹² When the food was cooked Mahaprabhu himself came and served to the guests and took every care to see that they ate to their entire satisfaction. Thus he set up an ideal of *atithi-seva* (service to the guests) by house-holders.¹¹³ Vrindavan Das Thakur says, "Though the people of Nadiya could not know on account of the Maya of the Maya-pati that Lakshmi-Narayana Themselves had descended on Earth to play host and hostess out of mercy for the Jivas of Kali, Brahma, Shiva, Shuka, Vyasa and all the other gods and Siddha Purushas knew this. They could not miss this opportunity of being blest by receiving *bhiksa* from Their hands. Therefore they came in the guise of beggars and received *bhiksa* from them. The Lord in this Avatara gave to all and sundry, the rich and the poor, the saints and the sinners, the pious and the impious, the food in *bhiksa*, which even the gods covet, but cannot get, so that they might be easily delivered from bondage by eating it.

¹¹¹ ibid, 16 - 17.

¹¹² ibid, 18.

¹¹³ ibid, 21 - 22.

Ever since the arrival of Lakshmi there was no end to the happiness of Shachi. Lakshmi did not let her do any work. She herself did everything, including the service of the deities and, Tulasi. But more than the service of the deities she loved to serve Shachi. She was so sweet, serviceable, loving and lovable and always so blissful that Shachi often wondered whether she was human. She also saw some supernatural phenomena about her, which made her think that she was superhuman. Sometimes, when Lakshmi sat with the feet of Mahaprabhu in her lap to serve, she saw a column of brilliant light beneath his feet; sometimes she felt that her house was filled with a divine fragrance like that of lotus.¹¹⁴

VISIT TO EAST BENGAL

Mahaprabhu was now eighteen years old. He had the desire to visit East Bengal (now Bangla Desh), where his ancestors had lived. He took the permission of his mother, which he obtained with some difficulty, and started with some of his students. On reaching there he felt attracted by the beauty of the river Padma. He bathed in the river with his students and camped on its bank. His fame as the golden Pandit, who had conquered Digvijayi, had already reached there. As soon as the people came to know about his visit, they began to flock to him. They came with all kinds of

¹¹⁴ ibid, 86 - 87.

presents and offerings and said, "It is our great good luck that you have come. We thought that you were an incarnation of Vrihaspati. But no, you are a partial manifestation of Bhagavan Himself, otherwise how could you be as learned as you are. We had been thinking of going to Navadvip to study in your *Tol*. We have already been reading your commentary (on Kalapa Vyakarana) and teaching from it. Now that you have come, we would request you to stay here for sometime and teach us." ¹¹⁵ Mahaprabhu agreed. He started teaching. Thousands of students came to attend his classes.¹¹⁶ It is not known how long he stayed there. But those who came to receive his lessons learnt the entire course within two months and returned with a degree, which Mahaprabhu gave.¹¹⁷ Then others came to learn and returned after receiving the degree. In this way, according to some writers, Mahaprabhu stayed there for about a year.¹¹⁸

When people came to know that he was about to leave, they came with offerings of gold, silver, clothes and gifts of various other kinds, which he accepted with pleasure.¹¹⁹ Thousands of students also came to accompany him to Navadvip and study in his *tol*.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ ibid, 70 - 79.

¹¹⁶ ibid, 94.

¹¹⁷ ibid, 97.

¹¹⁸ S.K. Ghosh: *Lord Gauranga*, Vol. I, p. 61.

¹¹⁹ ibid, 111 - 112.

¹²⁰ ibid, 115.

At this time also came to him a Brahmin, whose name was Tapana Mishra. The Brahmin was in deep anxiety, because though he had realized the transitoriness of the world, he was not able to decide what exactly was the highest End (*Sadhyā*) and what was the means (*Sadhana*) to attain it. He always did the *japa* of the name of his *Ishta*,¹²¹ expecting that the *Ishta* would cast a ray of light to dispel the darkness that surrounded him. One day he saw in a dream at the end of night a divine being saying to him, "Brahmin! You need worry no more. You go to Nimai Pandit. He will tell you all about the End and the means. Do not take Him to be human. He is Narayana Himself, Who has appeared in human form for the good of human beings. Keep this secret to yourself. You will come to harm, if you do not."¹²²

The Brahmin was happy to see the dream. Forthwith he started for the place, where lived Pandit Nimai. As soon as he reached there he saw a golden and stately figure surrounded by many students. He had no difficulty in recognizing him. He fell at his feet and said with tears in his eyes and throat choked with emotion, "I am a lowly creature, utterly ignorant of the supreme End of life and the means to attain it. I take shelter under your feet. Kindly tell me about the end and means. I am anxious to know about

¹²¹ The God one worships.

¹²² *ibid.* 120 - 124.

these because I am fed up with worldly life and things.”¹²³

Mahaprabhu said, “Brahamin! You are fortunate, because you want to do *Krishna-bhajan*. I tell you about the essence of *bhajan*. For the four yugas, four different kinds of *bhajan* or *dharma* have been prescribed by the Shastras. The *dharma* of the Kali-yuga is *Nam-sankirtan*. No other *dharma* will bear fruit in this *yuga*. Even the Vedas cannot sufficiently sing the glory of the man, who chants Harinam day and night. Therefore go home, do *Krishna-bhajan* and chant this Mahamantra consisting of sixteen names and thirty-two letters:

*Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare
Hare/
Hare Ram Hare Ram Ram Ram Hare Hare//*

Constant chanting of the Name will make the Name sprout into *prem*. As soon as *prem* sprouts, you will know everything about Means and End.”¹²⁴

What Mahaprabhu told Tapana Mishra seems to need clarification. He had already *told* him about End and means. He had said that *Krishna-bhajan* or the loving service of Krishna was the End and *Nam-sankirtan* the means. Why then did he say that when *prem* would sprout, he would know everything about

¹²³ ibid, 129 - 131.

¹²⁴ ibid, 139 - 147.

End and means? The apparent contradiction seems to imply the distinction between *jnana* or theoretical knowledge and *vijnana* or knowledge by actual experience. It is on the sprouting of *prem* that one knows by direct experience the real nature of the End as well as the means.

On hearing what Mahaprabhu said Mishra repeatedly made obeisance to him and said, "If you permit, I would like to accompany you."

Mahaprabhu said, "You go to Varanasi. After sometime I shall meet you there and tell you more about the End and means."¹²⁵

When he was about to depart Mahaprabhu gave him a loving embrace. He then whispered quietly into Mahaprabhu's ear what he was *told* about him in the dream. Mahaprabhu replied, "What you were *told* in the dream is true. But you must not reveal it to anyone."

Then Mahaprabhu returned to Navadvip. Thousands of students from East Bengal accompanied him to read in his *tol*. He carried with him a huge load of gifts of all kinds, including gold and silver, which the people of East Bengal lovingly gave at the time of his departure.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ *ibid*, 148 - 150.

¹²⁶ C. Bh. 1, 14, 110 -113.

DISAPPEARANCE OF LAKSHMI

Mahaprabhu's visit to East Bengal has been mentioned by Murari Gupt¹²⁷ and Kavikarnapura¹²⁸ too. They have also not given any details of his travels in East Bengal. It appears, however, from the account given in *Chaitanya-bhagavata* and *Chaitanya-charitamrita*¹²⁹ that he did not stay all the time at one place. Probably he set up a mobile *tol*, which went from place to place, taught at each place for a couple of months and gave degrees; on his way. As Krishna Das Kaviraj says, he served the whole of East Bengal. It seems likely, therefore, that he stayed in East Bengal for about a year, as some think.

His continued absence from home for such a long period was too much for Lakshmi to bear. She served Shachi during the day, but wept the whole night. She hardly ate anything. Thus she became weaker and weaker. Ultimately one day she clasped the feet of her husband in meditation and left her physical body. In her transcendental body she went and met the Lord.¹³⁰

There was then no end to the grief of Shachi. When Mahaprabhu returned from East Bengal, he consoled her by saying, "Ma! You need not grieve,

¹²⁷ *Kadacha*, 1, 11, 5 - 16.

¹²⁸ *Mahakavya*, 3, 91 - 95.

¹²⁹ C. C., 1, 16, 17.

¹³⁰ C. Bh., 1, 14, 105.

for the world is transitory and the relationships here are temporary. Every thing happens according to the wish of the Lord and we have to abide by His wish.”¹³¹

Shri Krishna Das Kaviraj says that while in East Bengal, Mahaprabhu not only taught, but also preached Harinam.¹³² But when he returned to Navadvip, he was the same frolicsome and playful pandit as before. In his *tol* he taught the students, outside the *tol* he played with them. He was full of humour and jests. He made fun of almost everyone.¹³³ But he always avoided women and never even looked at them.¹³⁴ He loved particularly to tease and ridicule the residents of Shrihatta. They reacted by retorting in anger, “Your own ancestors were all residents of Shrihatta. Do you not ridicule them by ridiculing us?” Still he persisted in his jokes with them and enjoyed their reaction.¹³⁵

Though he loved his students as his brethren and played with them, he did not spare them, if he found any fault in their conduct. If, for instance, he found any student coming to the *tol* without wearing *tilak* or *kanthi* or without doing Sandhya,¹³⁶ he came down so heavily upon him that he blushed with shame before

¹³¹ ibid, 183 - 187,

¹³² C. C., 1, 16, 17.

¹³³ C. Bh., 1, 15, 16.

¹³⁴ ibid, 17, 28.

¹³⁵ ibid, 18 - 23.

¹³⁶ Morning, midday or evening prayer.

the other students and never again came to the *tol* without *tilak* or without doing Sandhya.¹³⁷

Mahaprabhu was at this time lost in ‘*vidya-rasa*’.¹³⁸ He went to his *tol* in the Chandi-mandapa of Mukund Sanjaya early in the morning and taught for two *praharas* (6 hours). Again he started teaching in the evening and taught till midnight.¹³⁹

MARRIAGE WITH VISHNUPRIYA

While Mahaprabhu was thus lost in Vidya-rasa, Shachi was anxiously looking for a suitable match for his marriage. There lived in Navadvip Sanatan Mishra, a learned Brahmin, generally known as Raj-pandit. He was Vishnu-*bhakta*, wealthy and munificent. His daughter Vishnupriya was beautiful and intensely religious. She bathed in Ganga two or three times a day and knew nothing except the service of Vishnu and her parents.¹⁴⁰ Shachi saw her every day, when she went to the Ganga for bathing. Everyday Vishnupriya made obeisance to her and she blessed her by saying, “May the Lord give you the husband you deserve.” In her mind she thought that the girl was just the type she wanted for Nimai. As providence

¹³⁷ C. Bh., 1, 15, 8 - 17.

¹³⁸ The joy that comes from learning (*vidya*) or imparting learning to others.

¹³⁹ C. Bh., 1, 15, 35-36.

¹⁴⁰ ibid, 44 - 46.

would have it, Sanatan Mishra was also looking for a suitable match for his daughter and he thought that no one would be more suitable than the golden-hued and *digvijayi-vijayi* (the conqueror of the world conqueror) Pandit Nimai, whose fame as the conqueror of the world-conqueror had spread far and wide. But he doubted that Nami Pandit would accept his daughter as his bride.

One day Shachi called Kashinatha Pandit and sent through him the proposal of marriage to Sanatan Mishra. There was no end to the happiness of Raj-pandit Sanatan. The marriage was quickly settled. Everyone was happy to know that Nimai Pandit was going to wed the illustrious Raj-pandit's virtuous daughter Vishnupriya. Buddhimant Khan, the biggest landlord of Nadiya and a great admirer of Mahaprabhu offered to bear the entire expenses of the marriage, on behalf of the bridegroom and resolved to perform the marriage with such éclat that it might look like the marriage of a prince. Mukund Sanjaya, the rich man, in whose Chandi-mandapa Mahaprabhu ran his *tol*, also offered to join hands with Buddhimant Khan.¹⁴¹ The marriage was performed with great pomp and show. The entire Navadvip was made to wear a festive look with bunting, banners and illuminations. At the auspicious moment the bride came home with the bride-groom in a decorated palanquin accompanied by minstrels playing on musical instruments of various

¹⁴¹ ibid, 69 - 72.

kinds. Everyone who saw the couple went into ecstasy. Some said they looked like Lakshmi-Narayana, some said they looked like Rukmini-Krishna, some said they looked like Hara-Gauri, and some said they looked like Kamadeva and Rati.¹⁴²

¹⁴² *ibid*, 205 - 208.

CHAPTER VII

CRUSADE AGAINST THE VAISHNAVS

We have already described how the people of Navadvip, who were mostly Shaktas, oppressed the Vaishnavs. The Vaishnavs were also the target of the tyranny of the Muslim rulers more than any other Hindus, because of their *Sankirtan*, which they regarded as the highest form of worship and the easiest way for the attainment of the Lord. As an example of the tyranny of the Muslims Vrindavan Das Thakur mentions the case of Haridas Thakur in some detail.

PERSECUTION OF HARIDASA

Haridas was born in Burhana, a village in district Khulana of Bengal.¹ According to some he was born a Mohhammadan, while according to others he was born a Hindu, but brought up by the powerful Muslim Kaji of Hakimapur, whose name was Habibulla. Haridas was exquisitely beautiful. He was very much loved by

¹ C. Bh., 1, 16, 18.

Habibulla and his wife and was brought up in luxury. He was still too young when the ambrosial stream of Nam-Kirtan began to flow in his heart and he renounced the world. He became, for all practical purposes, a Hindu recluse. It is surprising how the Mohammadan Haridas, the adopted son of powerful Habibulla, became, at the prime of his youth, the crest jewel of the orthodox Hindus, specially at the time, when lacs and lacs of Hindus were being harassed and proselytized as Mohammadans by the tyrannical Muslim rulers. This must have been due to his strong Hindu *samsakaras*.

After renouncing Haridas began to live in the forest Benapol and do *bhajan*. He chanted the Mahamantra three lac times every day, of which one lac he chanted aloud. The fame of Haridas as a Mahatma increased day by day. Some people felt jealous of him and tried to oppress him in various ways so that he might be compelled to give up his *bhajan*. The tutelary king Raja Ramchandra Khan was one of them. But all their efforts to dissuade him from the path of *bhajan* proved futile like trying to throw dust upon the sun. At last Ramchandra Khan engaged a prostitute named Hira to disgrace him and make him deviate from *bhajan*.

The prostitute entered the forest Benapol in the darkness of night and proceeded towards the hermitage of Haridas. On entering the hermitage she saw that he was doing *nam-japa*. She proposed love to him and made significant gestures. But he sat unmoved and

unconcerned like a child. At the end he said to her with a smile, "Let me complete three lac *nam-japa*, then I shall fulfill your desire."

The prostitute felt happy and assured. But the *japa* could not be completed that night. Haridas asked her to come the next day. Two more nights passed in the same way. Neither the *japa* was completed, nor the prostitute's desire fulfilled. For three days she watched Haridas Thakur doing *nam-japa* with great absorption and tears flowing incessantly from his eyes. A transcendental lustre on his face indicated that he was always in touch with the divine. This made her body shiver and mind dive deep in the ocean of Nam-rasa.² The fire of penitence began to burn in her heart. A total change came upon her. She begged pardon of Haridas. Haridas said, "Devi!³ I would have left Benepol and gone elsewhere the next day after you came, but I did not for the sake of your deliverance. Now you need not worry. Give up prostitution and the wealth earned from it and take shelter under Harinam. I shall now leave this cottage. You live in it and do Harinam. The merciful Lord will have mercy on you." The prostitute did likewise. She gave away all her wealth to Brahamins. Like Haridas she lived in his cottage all her life, did three lac Harinam every day and ate what she got in *madhukari*.

² Bliss caused by Harinam.

³ 'Devi' means goddess. It is used as a term of respect for ladies.

Ramchandra Khan was also penitent. He prayed to Haridas for forgiveness. Haridas forgave, but the Lord did not. In order to hide himself from dacoits he lived for some time in an underground cell, where he died.⁴

Haridas went to Chandpur, where he lived for some time, then shifted to Shantipur and began to live there in the company of Advaitcharya. Advaitcharya was pleased by his devotion and gave him Diksa. Then he began to live and do *bhajan* in village Phuliya near Shantipur. The bank of Ganga in Phuliya was enlivened and inspirited by the Nam-kirtan of Haridas. He sometimes laughed, sometimes wept, sometimes shouted like a lion in *bhav*. Sometimes he fell senseless on the ground and the *asta-sattvika bhavs* manifested themselves on his body.⁵ His fame as a Siddha saint spread far and wide and people began to come from distant places for his *darshan*. This became intolerable to Gorai, the Kaji and he went and reported everything to Badashah Hussain Shah. In his plaint he said, "Hairdas is Mohammedan, but in his conduct he behaves like the Hindus. He chants Hari-nam, which has an adverse effect upon the other Mohammadans."⁶ Husain Shah ordered his arrest. Haridas was imprisoned. The other prisoners in the prison were happy on his arrival. They respectfully made obeisance

⁴ *Bharatera Sadhaka*, Last Vol., p. 6.

⁵ C. Bh., 1, 16, 24 - 29.

⁶ *ibid*, 36 - 37.

at his feet. He blessed them by saying, "You are all well now. So you remain."⁷

The prisoners were unhappy to hear this. They thought it was not a blessing but curse, because he wished them always to remain in prison. Haridas removed their misgiving by explaining what he meant. He said, "At present you are away from the world and its pleasures and free from the oppression of the rulers. You always think of Krishna. If you go out, you may again fall a prey to Maya and forget Krishna. I did not mean that you should always remain in prison. What I meant was that whether you remained in prison or outside, you should never forget Krishna. Now, since you are here and there is nothing to cause any distraction, you should together perform *Sankirtan*.⁸

Soon Haridas was presented in the court of Husain Shah. Husain Shah was impressed by his powerful and lustrous personality. He received him well. But he said, "Haridas! you are fortunate to have been born a Mohammadan. I do not understand why you live and behave like the Hindus. You need not, however, bother about all the offenses you have committed out of ignorance. You can now purify yourself by reciting *kalama*."⁹

Haridas laughed and said, "Your Highness! The difference between Hindu and Musalmana is only in

⁷ C. Bh., 1, 16, 50.

⁸ ibid, 52 - 67.

⁹ Extract from *Kuran* recited at the time of baptism into Islam.

name. They are basically the same, because their God is one and the same. Only he is described differently by the scriptures in different religions. He sits in the heart of everyone and inspires him to do what He wants. No one can do otherwise. I also do what He makes me do. How can I do otherwise?"¹⁰

Husain Shah said, "Then listen. You must recite your own Shastras and give up the Harinam of the Hindus. If you don't you will be punished."¹¹

Haridas replied fearlessly, "I am completely in the hands of my Lord and I dance as He makes me dance. It is not possible for me to go against His will and give up Harinam. You may cut my body into pieces, if you like."¹²

Husain Shah then consulted the Kaji and ordered that Haridas be dragged through twenty-two markets and flogged until he died.¹³

The order was cruelly executed. Haridas was chained and carried through twenty-two markets, the whippers whipping him all through as hard as they could. The people, who saw Haridas being beaten by the cruel whippers, felt very much pained at heart. Some even felt like beating the whippers; some held their feet and requested them not to beat so hard. But Haridas

¹⁰ C. Bh., 1, 16, 77 - 82.

¹¹ ibid, 90 - 91.

¹² ibid, 90 - 91.

¹³ ibid, 95 - 98.

chanted 'Krishna, Krishna!' all the time and was so lost in the bliss he experienced in chanting that he did not at all feel the pain of whipping.¹⁴ In his mind he prayed to the Lord to forgive the whippers and others responsible for the beating.¹⁵ The whippers wondered that howsoever hard they whipped, it did not have any effect on him. He always chanted and laughed. They said to each other, "This man is not ordinary. He must be a *pir*,¹⁶ otherwise how can he withstand so much beating. Criminals die when beaten only in two or three markets. But we have beaten him so hard in twenty-two markets, still he neither grieves nor weeps. He seems to be as strong and happy as ever."¹⁷

In utter helplessness they said to Haridas, "Haridas! If you do not die, we shall have to die. The Kaji will punish us for not beating you to death."¹⁸

Haridas laughed and said, "Brethren! If you think my life means your death, I die." Immediately he went into Samadhi. His body lay motionless, and breathless. The whippers thought he was dead. They took his body to Husain Shah. Husain Shah asked them to bury it. But the Kaji said, "If he is buried, he will get a good position in life after death. He should be cast away into Ganga, so that he suffers indefinitely."

¹⁴ ibid, 102, 108 - 110.

¹⁵ ibid, 113.

¹⁶ A Siddha saint having supernatural power.

¹⁷ ibid, 116 - 118.

¹⁸ ibid, 119 - 120.

So he was thrown into river Ganga. After some time he regained consciousness. He came out of the river and began to stroll about dancing and chanting aloud Harinam. The Mohammadans were all stupefied to see Haridas alive. They bowed down to him, considering that he was a *pir*. That marked the end of their hostility against him. When Husain Shah came to know about this, he was struck with dismay. He came to Haridas and stood before him with folded hands, his body shivering and tears trickling down his eyes. He said, "Haridas! Forgive me for what I did under ignorance. I have now come to know that you are a *pira*. So you are worshipable by all. I am sorry for the suffering you had to undergo on account of me. I hope you will excuse me, since I know that for you your friends and enemies are the same. You can now live freely where you like and do what you like. No one will ever do any harm to you."¹⁹

Haridas showed mercy to Husain Shah. He then proceeded to Phuliya chanting Harinam and dancing in ecstasy. There was no end to the joy of the Brahamins of Phuliya when they saw him again in their midst. Haridas began to live in a cave on the bank of Ganga in Phuliya and do *bhajan*. He chanted three lac Harinam every day as before.

¹⁹ ibid, 149 - 155.

THE VISHNU-BHAKTA COBRA (NAG-RAJ)

On the basement of the cave there lived a powerful cobra, whose breath was hot like fire. On account of his exhalation it was difficult for the devotees, who came to Haridas for his *darshan*, to sit outside the cave even for a short while. They requested Haridas to leave the cave and shift elsewhere. But he did not, because he did not feel the heat, possibly because of the cooling and soothing effect of Harinam. When requested repeatedly, however, he said, "If really there is a Nag-raj (cobra-king) here, either he should leave or I. I shall leave tomorrow, if he does not."²⁰ The Nag-raj was a Vishnu-bhakta. He heard this. The next day in the evening the people saw a gigantic cobra, having beautiful yellow, blue and white spots over its body and a powerful jewel (*mahamani*) over its head, coming out of the cave and going elsewhere.²¹ The Brahamins were surprised and happy to see the cobra gone.

Soon after occurred a strange phenomenon. The Nag-raj using the power of Mantra, entered in his subtle body into the body of a snake-charmer and began to dance and sing the song describing the beauty of Krishna dancing on the head of the multifaced cobra of Kaliyadaha.²² As the Nag-raj danced and sang, the

²⁰ ibid, 187 - 188.

²¹ ibid, 192 - 193.

²² ibid, 199 - 200.

companions of the snake-charmer played *mirdanga*, cymbal and other instruments round him. A crowd gathered to watch the scene. Haridas also happened to be there. On hearing the song sung by Nag-raj, Sattvik Bhavas appeared on his body and he fell senseless on the ground. After some time, on regaining consciousness, he began to laugh and weep and roll on the ground in ecstasy. Horripilation, tremor and the other *Sattvik-bhavs* adorned his body. The people surrounded him and began to sing. Nag-raj stepped aside and stood silently watching the scene with folded hands. Soon Haridas controlled his *bhav* and stood aside. Nag-raj began to dance and sing as before.²³

Then a Brahamin, seeming to have been ecstasised by the song of Nag-raj like Haridas, fell motionless at the spot where Nagraj was dancing. Nagraj beat him hard and he ran away.

The people asked Nagraj why he beat him. He said, "The Brahamin was a hypocrite. He was aping Thakur Haridas so that he might be respected and worshipped like him. He deserved beating."²⁴

Then Nagraj began to glorify Haridas. He said, "No one can imitate Haridas. His dance is the dance of Shree Krishna, who always sits in his heart. His company is coveted by Brahma and Shiva. He took birth in a low caste at the behest of Shree Krishna in

²³ ibid, 204 - 212.

²⁴ ibid, 224 - 227.

order to prove that caste and family, whether low or high, had no meaning so far as Bhakti was concerned. Even Ganga covets that he may bathe in its waters so that it may be purified by his touch.”²⁵

The Brahmins of Phuliya were happy to hear about the greatness of Haridas from the mouth of Nagraj. Their faith in him and Harinam was further strengthened. But even the example of Haridas did not bring about any change in the attitude of the other Brahmins, who were mostly Shaktas, towards the Vaishnavs and Nam-sankirtan. They still believed that loud chanting of Harinam disturbed the sleep of the Lord,²⁶ on account of which he caused famine and other calamities.²⁷ Their condemnation of the Vaishnavs and Nam-kirtan went on increasing.

THE BRAHMIN OF HARINADI

A Brahmin of village Harinadi once accosted Haridas in an assembly of Brahmin pandits and said, “Haridas! I do not understand why you chant Harinam loudly. Can’t you repeat it within your mind? Let me know here in this assembly of pandits which Shastra enjoins the loud chanting of the Name?”

²⁵ *ibid*, 231 - 242.

²⁶ The Smartas believe that Vishnu sleeps during the four months of Shravana, Bhadra, Ashvina and Kartika.

²⁷ C. Bh., 1, 16, 259.

Haridas said, "Loud chanting of the name is hundred times more fruitful. All the Shastras emphasize its necessity and usefulness. None says that it is in any way harmful. Chanting within one's own mind delivers only the person chanting from bondage. Chanting loudly not only delivers the person chanting from Maya, but all those, who hear it. Even birds and animals and the other creatures, who cannot chant themselves, are delivered by hearing it. Now tell me what is better, doing good to only one's own self or to all others?"²⁸

The Brahmin was red with rage. He said to the assembled Brahmans, "Do you see? Haridas has become a philosopher. He has his own philosophy. This is how the Vedic philosophy and religion are slowly disappearing. What, according to the predictions made by the Shastras, was to happen towards the end of this *yuga*, has started happening right now. The Shudras have started formulating their own Veda."²⁹ Then he said to Haridas, "Look, if what you have said is not confirmed by the Shastras, I shall cut your nose and ears."³⁰

Haridas smiled and said, 'Hari, Hari!'. Because no one in the assembly could say anything else in refutation of the view expressed by him, he walked away from there, chanting *Harinam* aloud.

²⁸ ibid, 273 - 291.

²⁹ ibid, 291 - 293.

³⁰ ibid, 295.

Krishna could not tolerate the insulting remarks the Brahmin had arrogantly made against Haridas. He gave him the punishment he deserved. He developed small pox. The disease took a virulent shape, on account of which his nose and ears dropped.³¹

Haridas went to Navadvip, where Advaitcharya was now living. Advaitcharya and the other Vaishnavs were happy to have him in their midst. He was to Advaitcharya more than his heart and soul. Therefore he kept him near his own house and took all possible care of him.³²

³¹ ibid, 306 - 307.

³² ibid, 310 - 311.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PANDIT TURNS VAISHNAV

Mahaprabhu was so far lost in *Vidya-rasa*. But now his heart melted at the plight of the Vaishnavs. He thought he must do something for their protection and upliftment. He decided to manifest Himself as the great Lord, Who had come as their Messiah. But he thought he must first go to Gaya to perform the Shraddha of his father.¹ So he obtained the permission of his mother and started for Gaya with a number of his students.

VISIT TO GAYA AND INITIATION

On the way to Gaya Mahaprabhu had the *darshan* of Shree Madhusudana in a temple on Mt. Mandar. After he had crossed the hill he developed fever. Medicines failed to cure him. Then he took the *charanamrita* of Brahmans and was cured. Vrindavan Das says that the Lord manifested fever in His body, like an ordinary man having physical body, to teach the world the importance of the *charanamrita* of Brahmans engaged in the service of the Lord and to show how He Himself

¹ C. Bh., 1, 17, 7 - 9.

becomes the servant of His servant, who does nothing and thinks of nothing except His service.² On reaching Gaya Mahaprabhu went to Chakrabeda for the *darshan* of the foot-prints of the Lord. The Brahamins sitting there began to explain to him the importance of the foot-prints by glorifying them. They said in glorification, "These are the very feet, which Lakshmi regards as her life and soul, which once appeared on the head of Raja Bali and which are the source of river Bhagirathi. Yama cannot touch the person, who thinks of them even for a moment."³ As Mahaprabhu looked at the Foot-prints and heard their glorification by the Brahamins the Sattvik *bhavs* appeared on his body and tears began to flow from his eyes like a stream.⁴ Thus, says Vrindavan Das, the Lord started manifesting *prem* for the deliverance of the *jivas* of this world.⁵

At the same time, as Yogamaya designed, Ishvar Puri happened to come to Chakrabeda. Mahaprabhu made obeisance to him, while he lifted and embraced him. Each drowned the other with the tears of his eyes. Mahaprabhu said, "With your *darshan* I feel that my pilgrimage to Gaya has borne fruit. There is no Tirtha like your holy feet and no Shraddha is more fruitful than the *darshan* of your feet. Shraddha delivers from

² ibid, 16 - 25.

³ ibid, 36 - 38.

⁴ ibid, 42 - 43.

⁵ ibid, 44.

bondage only the ancestor to whom the *Shraddha-pind*⁶ is offered, but the *darshan* of your feet delivers crores of ancestors from all kinds of bondage. I pray that you may kindly deliver me from bondage and make me drink the nectar flowing from the lotus feet of Krishna.”⁷

Ishvar Puri said, “Look Pandit! I know for certain that you are not human, but a partial manifestation of Bhagavan Himself, because it is not possible for a human being to be as learned a pandit as you are. Ever since I saw you in Navadvip, I have been thinking of you and nothing else. I saw you in a dream last night. The dream is now proved true. Your *darshan* gives me the happiness, which comes from the *darshan* of Krishna.”⁸

Mahaprabhu laughed and said, “That is my good luck.”

Mahaprabhu then sought his permission and sat down to perform Shraddha. After performing Shraddha and worshipping the foot-prints of Vishnu, he went to the place where he was to stay. He cooked his food and had just finished cooking when Ishvar Puri arrived. He insisted on his taking food and said he would cook again for himself. Ishvar Puri had most reluctantly to agree. Vrindavan Das says that while Ishvar Puri was

⁶ A funeral cake, an oblation to deceased ancestors.

⁷ C. Bh., 1, 17, 50 - 55.

⁸ ibid, 56 - 61.

eating and Mahaprabhu was serving, Ram Devi (Laksmi) cooked for Mahaprabhu unnoticed by him or anyone else.⁹ Mahaprabhu ate after he had served Ishvar Puri.

Mahaprabhu then went to see Kumarahatta, the birthplace of Ishvar Puri. Tears trickled down his eyes to see that place. He took a handful of dust from there and, tying it to a corner of his *bahirvas*, said, "The dust of the birth-place of Ishvar Puri is the treasure of my heart."¹⁰

One day Mahaprabhu requested Ishvar Puri to give him Diksa (initiation). Ishvar Puri gave him Diksa in Dasaksara Mantra.¹¹ After initiation Mahaprabhu circumambulated his body and said, "I give myself up to you. Kindly show mercy on me so that I may swim in the ocean of Krishna-prem." Ishvar Puri gave him a loving embrace. Each bathed the other with the tears of his eyes.

The time was now ripe for Mahaprabhu's self-manifestation. Day by day his *prem-bhakti* began to increase. One day, when he was meditating on *Ishta-mantra* in seclusion, he was so overpowered with Krishna-viraha (mood of separation from Krishna) that he began to weep and shout, "O Krishna! My beloved, the heart of my heart, the soul of my soul! Where

⁹ ibid, 93.

¹⁰ ibid, 101 - 102.

¹¹ ibid, 107.

have You gone after stealing my heart?" He cried and wailed and rolled on the ground. His students came running.¹² After he was becalmed he said, "You go home and leave me here. I shall go to Mathura, where I shall find my Krishna."¹³ With great difficulty they could compose him a little. But at the end of the night, when everyone was asleep, he sneaked out and ran towards Mathura, crying, "O Krishna, my Lord! Where are You?"¹⁴

He had not gone far, when he heard an angelic voice saying, "Prabhu! The time for going to Mathura has not yet come. You are the Lord of Vaikunth. You have descended on Earth to preach *Sankirtan* and to distribute *prem*. No one can make You do anything against Your will. But we are Your servants and it is our duty to remind You of Your mission. You should go back to Navadvip for the present."¹⁵

Mahaprabhu was pacified. Soon after he went back to Navadvip with his students.

THE PANDIT TURNS VAISHNAV

Mahaprabhu returned to Navadvip. There was no end to the happiness of Ma Shachi and Vishnupriya. The Vaishnavs also received the news of his arrival with

¹² ibid, 114 - 121.

¹³ ibid, 122 - 124.

¹⁴ ibid, 127 - 128.

¹⁵ ibid, 127 - 128.

great joy. They started coming to him to inquire about his health and his experiences of the pilgrimage. Mahaprabhu said, "As soon as I entered Gaya, I was thrilled by the sound of countless Brahmans reciting Vedas round the Padodaka-*tirth*. That is the place where Krishna washed His feet, when He went to Gaya. It is on account of the water that fell from His feet that the place is called Padodaka-*tirth*. As he said this he was swept away by a strong current of *bhav*. He could hardly speak. Streams of tears began to flow from his eyes, and horripilation and tremor shook his body like a tempest. He only said, "Krishna, Krishna!" and drew deep breaths and wept. Sriman and the other Vaishnavs, who had come to see him said to each other, "We never saw him like this. It appears that Krishna gave him *darshan* or showed mercy on him in some way."¹⁶ They inquired about the cause of his restlessness. He said, when he had composed himself a little, "Brethren! You go home today. Come tomorrow morning at the house of Shuklambar Brahmachari, where I shall privately tell you all about my owes."¹⁷

Sriman Pandit and the other Vaishnavs, who came with him, were happy beyond measure to see Pandit Nimai turned a Vaishnav. The Pandit, who used to make fun of the Vaishnavs, whom the Vaishnavs tried to avoid for fear of being challenged for a debate on any subject they chose, who was proud of his learning

¹⁶ ibid, 29 - 36.

¹⁷ ibid, 37 - 40.

and arrogant to a degree, who swam always in the ocean of *Vidya-rasa*, had dived deep into *prem-rasa*. The long cherished desire of the Vaishnavs was now fulfilled. Fortune had suddenly begun to smile on them, it seemed. Sriman Pandit became restless to convey the news to Srivas Pandit and the other Vaishnavs.

The Vaishnavs used to meet early in the morning in an orchard in the house of Srivas. There was a *kund*¹⁸ tree in the orchard, which used to be laden with flowers throughout the year. The Vaishnavs went there to pick flowers for the worship of their deities. The next morning, when Sriman Pandit went there, the Vaishnavs were surprised to see him extraordinarily happy. They said, "Sriman! You look so happy. What makes you happy?" Sriman said, "There is good reason for happiness. What is most wonderful has happened. Nimai Pandit has become *param-Vaishnav*. On his return from Gaya yesterday, when I went to see him, I found that he was no more the mischievous Pandit, but a very sober and serious Vaishnav, who only talked of Krishna and wept as he talked. I never saw such stream of tears as flowed incessantly from his eyes. I never saw such *Sattvik-bhavs* as appeared on his body, when he tried to talk of Krishna. He only said 'Krishna' and fell on the ground, senseless, motionless and breathless. He has asked us to assemble at the house of Shuklambara Brahmachari this morning, where he would tell us how the change came upon

¹⁸ A variety of jasmine.

him." The Vaishnavs shouted 'Haribol!' in exuberance of joy and danced to hear this. Srivas, Sadashiv, Sriman and Murari went to the house of Shukalambhar. Gadadhar also went, but remained in hiding somewhere near so that he might hear what Mahaprabhu said.

Sometime later came Mahaprabhu Gaur Sundar. His eyes were still swimming in tears. He was in a half-conscious state. But as soon as he saw the Vaishnavs, he recited a Shlok meaning, 'I found Krishna and lost Him.' Then in a terrific outburst of emotion he shouted 'Ha Krishna!' and clasped firmly a pillar in the house and fell down senseless on the ground with the pillar.¹⁹ The Vaishnavs, including Gadadhar, who was hiding inside, also caught the current of *bhav* discharged by him and fell down senseless one by one.²⁰ After sometime when Mahaprabhu regained outward consciousness, he said, "Krishna, my beloved! Where are You?" and again fell on the ground and wept. The Vaishnavs also wept and performed *kirtan*. After he had composed himself, he said, "Who is weeping inside?" The Vaishnavs replied, "Your Gadadhar." Mahaprabhu said, "Gadadhar! You are fortunate. You have been worshipping Krishna since your childhood. I am unfortunate, because I lost all my time in other pursuits. Even now when I found Krishna, I lost Him." As he said this he again fell senseless on the ground. On

¹⁹ C. Bh., 1, 2, 82 - 86.

²⁰ ibid, 87 - 88.

regaining consciousness he threw his arm round the neck of some Vaishnav and said, "Oh! Get me my Krishna, the son of Nand" and again became unconscious. Thus repeatedly he lost consciousness in remembrance of Krishna. The whole day passed like this. At the end he took leave of the Vaishnavs and went home.²¹

Gadadhar, Sriman, Sadashiv and Shuklambara were surprised to see how Vishvambara swam in the ocean of Krishna-*prem* and was constantly tossed up and down by its waves. They conveyed this good news to the other Vaishnavs. As they heard this, tears of joy flowed from their eyes and they shouted 'Haribol!' Some said, "Now with the grace of Krishna fortune has smiled on us and great things are bound to happen." Some said, "Now the time has come for the hypocritical Brahmans, who made fun of us and tormented us in various ways, to be crushed." Some said, "This change in Nimai Pandit has come on account of his association with Ishvar Puri, some said that it was possibly due to Krishna-*darshan*, which he might have been blessed with in Gaya."²²

As soon as Mahaprabhu was somewhat self-composed, he went to his guru Ganga Das. He respectfully prostrated himself before him. Ganga Das embraced him lovingly and said, "Nimai! I am happy that you have come. Your students have been very

²¹ ibid, 90 - 107.

²² ibid, 111, 116.

much heart-broken since you went. They said they would not read from anyone else, not even from Brahma, if he comes. You should now go home and start teaching them from tomorrow."

ANXIETY OF SHACHI

Mahaprabhu went home and sat in front of the temple of Vishnu. Many people came to see him. They were surprised to see the erstwhile restless and mischievous Pandit Nimai sitting calm and quiet like the perfect image of calmness and sobriety. He talked briefly and courteously with them and sent them away.

Mother Shachi was anxious and bewildered to see Nimai's total indifference to the family and the affairs of the world. She prayed to Krishna and said, "Krishna! You took away from me my husband and my Vishvarup. Now Vishvambhar alone is left. Be merciful to me and bless so that he may be well and happy and stay at home."²³ She made Vishnupriya sit by his side, so that he might smile and talk with her, but he did not even look at her. He only cried, "Krishna, my Lord! Where are you?" and wept. At night he went to bed, but he did not sleep. He sometimes sat, sometimes lay down, saying "Krishna, Krishna!" Some times he shouted so loud in *bhav* that Vishnupriya was frightened and ran to Shachi.²⁴

²³ C. Bh., 2. 1, 135 -136.

²⁴ ibid, 137 - 140.

TRANSCENDENTAL TEACHINGS

In the morning Mahaprabhu went to the Ganga to bathe. As soon as he returned his students came to read. They saw him incessantly chanting ‘Krishna, Krishna!’ which they could not understand. On their insistence he asked them to open their books. They opened their books, saying ‘Hari, Hari!’ As soon as he heard the name ‘Hari’, he was ecstasised. He looked kindly at his students and started explaining the Sutras in terms of Hari-nam and glorifying the Name by saying, “The Name ‘Krishna’ alone is true, everything else is false. The Shastras speak only of Krishna and nothing else. Krishna is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world. Brahma and Shiva are His servants. Anyone, who talks of anything except Krishna only wastes his time. According to the Vedas and the other Shastras the only thing worth cultivating is Krishna-*bhakti*.²⁵ The teachers, who teach anything different, are deluded by Maya. Krishna is merciful, loving and lovable. He loves His devotees with all His heart and soul. Those who do not have faith in Krishna, are doomed, even if they are well versed in all the Shastras, while those, who chant Krishna-nam, go to His dham, even if they be full of faults.²⁶ Those who teach the Shastras, but do not do Krishna-*bhajan*, have not understood the meaning of the Shastras. They

²⁵ ibid, 147 - 151.

²⁶ ibid, 153 - 156.

only carry the load of the Shastras on their back like donkeys till they die.”²⁷

“The Shastras say that Krishna is so merciful that He gave Mukti even to the demons like Putana and Aghasur. Even Lakshmi aspires to serve the lotus feet of Krishna. How can anyone think of anything other than Krishna and take the name of anyone other than Krishna?²⁸ What I say is true, eternally and beyond doubt. No one can disprove what I say.”

After this Mahaprabhu’s *bhav* subsided. He looked blushingly towards his pupils and said, “How did you like my commentary on the Sutra?” The students said, “We did not understand anything. It was all along a harangue on Krishna. How could we understand?” Mahaprabhu said, “No more today. Let us go to bathe in the Ganga now.” They closed their books and went to Ganga with him. After bathing he went back home, changed his clothes and washed his feet. Then after worshipping Govind he sat down to eat the *prasad* served by Shachi. Shachi sat in front, while Vishnupriya watched him eating and heard the conversation between the mother and the son from inside. Shachi said, “Vishvambhar! What did you teach today?” Vishvambhar said, “Ma! I taught Krishna-nam. Ma! Krishna alone is true and true are the *kirtan* of Krishna-nam, Krishna-*lila* and the attributes of Krishna. True are the devotees of Krishna and the Shastras that

²⁷ ibid, 157 - 158.

²⁸ ibid, 160 - 168.

describe Krishna and Krishna-*bhakti*. The Shastras that do not describe Krishna are untrue. A *chandal*²⁹ is not *chandal*, if he chants Krishna-nam and a Brahmin is not Brahmin, if he does not tread the right path.³⁰

“Ma! The power of Krishna-*bhakti* is infinite. A Krishna-*bhakta* never dies. Krishna-*bhakta* and his mother do not suffer the pains of pregnancy. But there is no end to the suffering of those, who are not Krishna-*bhakta*. They suffer the eternal cycle of birth and death. While in the mother’s womb they are surrounded and constantly bitten by worms. The worst sinners among them die in the womb, enter it and die again and again.³¹

“Ma! In its seventh month the Jiva in the womb develops understanding and memory. It feels penitent for its past deeds and prays to Krishna for deliverance. He says, “Prabhu! I surrender myself at Your feet. If You deliver me this time, I shall always remain Your servant. I shall not even in dream think of anything else.³² Due to his prayer and remembrance of Krishna, he does not feel any discomfort in the womb at that time. But as soon as he comes out, he is attacked by Maya. He loses his understanding and memory. He begins again to suffer pain and weep. If by chance or good luck he finds the company of Krishna-*bhakta*

²⁹ A caste of heinous people.

³⁰ C. Bh., 2, 1, 193 - 197.

³¹ ibid, 203 -208.

³² ibid, 209 - 228.

and does Krishna-*bhajan*, Krishna delivers him from the bondage of Maya, otherwise he continues to suffer birth and death.³³ Therefore Ma, do Krishna-*bhajan* and keep the company of Krishna-*bhakta* Sadhus."³⁴ Mahaprabhu thus gave precepts to his mother, even as the sage Kapil gave precepts to his mother.³⁵

All day and night Mahaprabhu talked only of Krishna. The next day also when he started teaching the students he talked only of Krishna. He said that the Shastras from beginning to end talked only of Krishna. When requested to explain a Sutra relating to alphabet he said, "Each letter of the alphabet implies Krishna."

The students thought he was mentally deranged. They said, "We do not understand your explanation. There does not seem to be any sense in what you say." Mahaprabhu said, "This is what all the Shastras say. If you have not understood, come again in the evening, when I shall further explain."³⁶

Not satisfied with what Mahaprabhu said, the students went to Gangadas Pandit. They said to him, "We do not understand what has happened to Nimai Pandit since he returned from Gaya. He knows nothing except Krishna. Every letter and word he explains in

³³ ibid, 230 - 235.

³⁴ ibid, Kapil was the sage, who founded the Sankhya system of philosophy.

³⁵

³⁶ ibid, 257 - 258.

terms of Krishna. While explaining he sometimes laughs, some times shouts. Horripilation and tremor appear on his body and he does not seem to be in his senses. Now tell us what we should do.”³⁷

Gangadas laughed and said, “You go home just now. Come in the evening with Nimai. I shall ask him to teach you as he did before.”

In the evening the students went to him again with Pandit Nimai. Nimai took the dust of his feet and applied it to his head. Gangadas blessed him. Then he said, “Vishvambhar! Your father was Mishra Purandara and your maternal grandfather Nilambara Chakravarti is a pandit of repute. You are yourself a great pandit. Tell me one thing. Is Bhakti not possible without renouncing learning and teaching? Were your father and maternal grandfather not *bhaktas*? If they were, why can’t you combine *bhakti* with teaching? Look, one may be Vaishnav, but if he remains uneducated, he will not be able to discriminate between right and wrong, which means that he will not be a good Brahmin. Therefore, go and teach well. Do not read in the Shastras any meaning, which they do not directly convey, otherwise, I shall feel very much hurt.”³⁸

Vishvambhar said, “By your grace there is no one in Navadvip who can disprove whatever I say in my explanation of the Sutras. I will go presently and sit

³⁷ ibid, 261 - 266.

³⁸ ibid, 271 - 278.

in some public place and teach. Let me see, who has the courage to come and criticize my explanation.”³⁹

Gangadas Pandit was pleased at heart to hear this, though outwardly he pretended to be angry. What else could he do? Vishvambhar was no ordinary pupil. He was, as Vrindavan Das says, *Veda-pati* and *Sarasvati-pati*.⁴⁰

Vishvambhar girded up his loins, tied his upper garment round his waist and went with his pupils in a challenging mood to some place, where the pandits used to gather and started teaching.⁴¹

The pandits listened from a distance his explanation of the Sutras in terms of Krishna and *Krishna-bhakti*. They wondered and talked among themselves, disapproving what he said, but none had the courage to go near and express his disapproval. Mahaprabhu continued his commentary till after sunset, when he heard Ratnagarbh, a devotee reciting, at some distance in the neighbourhood, the Bhagavat Shlok (Bh., 10, 23, 12) describing the beauty of Shri Krishna as seen by the wives of Yajnika Brahamins. As soon as he heard the Shlok, he fell senseless on the ground. After regaining consciousness he asked Ratnagarbh to recite the Shlok again and again. He recited; Mahaprabhu heard and rolled on the ground in ecstasy. Horripilation, tremor and the other *Sattvik-bhavs*

³⁹ ibid, 280 - 281.

⁴⁰ ibid, 283.

⁴¹ ibid, 286 - 287,

appeared on his body. Pleased with the Bhakti of Ratnagarbh he embraced him lovingly. As soon as embraced Ratnagarbh was charged with a strong current of *prem-bhakti*. He fell at the feet of Mahaprabhu and began to weep and recite the Shlok more passionately. He recited and Mahaprabhu spurred him on to recite more and more. This continued for a long time. It appeared that it would never end. Then Gadadhar, who was there, made Ratnagarbh stop reciting. Mahaprabhu regained outward consciousness. He went to the bank of Ganga with the students and discoursed on Krishna for some time, then went home.⁴²

Day after day Mahaprabhu taught his students like this. On the tenth day a student said, "Tell us what is *dhatu*."⁴³ Mahaprabhu replied, "*Dhatu* is the name of *Krishna-shakti*." He then began to comment upon the Sutra relating to *dhatu* with great animation. He said, "Wherever you see life, power or greatness of any kind take it to be due to *Krishna-shakti*. The King is grand, majestic and powerful; he has the power of Yama to kill and the power of Lakshmi to enrich anyone he likes. This is all due to *Krishna-shakti*. You do not respect him, but *Krishna-shakti* that resides in him. *Krishna-shakti* resides in every part of his body in the form of *dhatu*. As soon as the *dhatu* is gone his grandeur, beauty, power and everything is gone. He

⁴² ibid, 295 - 321.

⁴³ The root of a verb.

lies lifeless on the ground and his body is buried or burnt by his own son, who once played in his lap and was kissed and caressed by him.⁴⁴

"Therefore you worship Krishna, talk, hear and think of Krishna and nothing else. Krishna is very kind and merciful. He was merciful even to Putana, Aghasur and Bakasur, who wanted to kill him. Krishna is worshipped even by Lakshmi, Brahma and Shiva. My dear pupils! I bow down at your feet and pray that you also worship Krishna and do nothing else."⁴⁵

"In this way," says Vrindavan Das, "The Lord as Bhakta glorified Himself for two *praharas* (six hours), still the glorification did not end. The students listened like those spellbound, without raising any objection, because they were all servants of Krishna. How could they, whom Krishna taught Himself, be other than His servants."⁴⁶ When Mahaprabhu's animation subsided, he felt somewhat ashamed. Looking blushingly at the students he said, "Tell me how you liked my explanation of the *dhatu-sutra*."

The students replied, "Whatever you said is undoubtedly true. There is no one, who can say anything against your commentary of the Sutra. But your commentary does not seem to serve our purpose."⁴⁷

⁴⁴ C. Bh., 2, 1, 327 - 333.

⁴⁵ ibid, 335 - 343.

⁴⁶ ibid, 344 - 346.

⁴⁷ ibid, 349 - 350.

"Then it may be that I erred. Perhaps I am mentally unsound. Would you tell me how the line of thought in the commentary went?"

"You explained everything in terms of Harinam. Your explanation was superb. So it was bound to be, because you are not human, as everyone now knows. The kind of *bhavs* that appeared on your body that day, on hearing the Shlok recited by Ratnagarbh, no one ever saw or heard before. From the tears that streamed out of your eyes it appeared that it was not tears but Ganga that flowed from your eyes. Your body trembled so vehemently on account of *kampa* (tremor) that it was not possible for hundreds of people to hold it. Horripilation appeared on every inch of the body from head to foot. On seeing your *Sattvik-bhavs* some said that you were Narayana, some said that Narad Shuk, Prahlad and Vyas had combined in you. But you were unaware of all that happened that day."⁴⁸

"You are probably unaware that you have now been teaching us for ten days after your return from Gaya, but you have not taught a single lesson. You have only taught that all the Shastras, all Sutras, all words and letters of the alphabet teach Krishna and Krishna-*bhakti* and nothing else."⁴⁹

Mahaprabhu was surprised. He said, "If I did not teach you any lesson, why did you not tell me?"

⁴⁸ ibid, 356 - 365.

⁴⁹ ibid, 366 - 367.

The students replied, "We did not, because we were convinced that what you taught was the essence of the Shastras and what we actually needed to be taught."⁵⁰

CESSATION OF TEACHING: BEGINNING OF SANKIRTANA

Mahaprabhu was pleased. He said, "Brethren! What you say is true. But I tell you one secret. Always and everywhere I see Krishna playing on His flute and smiling. Every place appears to me to be Krishna-dham,⁵¹ and every word that I hear appears to me to be Krishna-nam. I cannot think or speak of anything except Krishna. Therefore I decide that I shall teach no more. You may go and study where you like."⁵² As he said this, he closed the book with tears trickling down from his eyes. The pupils began to weep. They said with their throats choked, "We also resolve not to go to anyone else and read any more. What we have learnt from you is enough. We pray to the Lord that it may remain in our mind and guide us life after life."⁵³ With this the pupils also closed their books and shouted 'Hari, Hari!'.

⁵⁰ ibid, 370 - 372.

⁵¹ The abode of Krishna.

⁵² ibid, 374 - 379.

⁵³ ibid, 381 - 385.

Mahaprabhu embraced them lovingly and said with tears in his eyes and throat choked with emotion, "I bless that you may all swim in Krishna-prem. Krishna-nam may always dance on your tongue and resound in your ears. Krishna may always be your life and soul. What you have read is enough for you. You need not read anymore. You should together do Krisnha-sankirtan."⁵⁴

The pupils said, "We do not know how to perform *Sankirtan*. You may kindly teach." Mahaprabhu started singing and asked them to sing with him:

*(hari) haraye namh krishna yadavaya namh/
gopal govind ram shri madhusudan//*

He clapped as he sang and the pupils sang round him. He sang and shouted and rolled on the ground in ecstasy.⁵⁵ The pupils also were ecstasised and sang louder and louder while tears incessantly flowed from their eyes. The *Sankirtan* sound echoed through the neighbourhood. The Vaishnavs and others in the neighbourhood came running. There was no end to their happiness to see the great Pandit Nimai, the conqueror of Digvijayi, rolling on the ground in Bhakti, such as even Narad, Shuk and Prahlad did not possess. After Mahaprabhu regained outward consciousness he saw the Vaishnavs. But he did not say anything. He

⁵⁴ ibid, 390 - 393.

⁵⁵ ibid, 406 - 411.

only said 'Krishna, Krishna' and threw his arm round them and wept. The Vaishnavs and the pupils also wept. The tears of love that flowed from their eyes announced the beginning of a new era in Navadvip, the era of *prem-bhakti*, such as was never known or experienced before.

CHAPTER IX

THE LORD'S SELF-MANIFESTATION

The Vaishnavs were happy beyond measure to see the sudden upsurge of *prem-bhakti* in Vishvambhar. They went and reported everything to Advaitcharya. Advaitcharya was also happy to hear what they said, specially because it seemed to confirm his own experiences, which he began to narrate to them. He said, "I was very much aggrieved, because I could not understand the meaning of a Gita-shlok. I decided to pray and fast until the right meaning flashed before my mind. I fasted, but in vain. Last night I saw a dream. Some one explained to me the meaning of the Shlok and said, "Acharya! Get up. Break the fast and worship Me. There is no reason now to feel aggrieved. You have fasted, wept and prayed enough. The purpose for which you fasted and prayed is now fulfilled. Your vow to make Shri Krishna appear on Earth has come true. Shri Krishna has appeared. Every home in every place will now resound with Krishna-kirtan. The Bhakti, which even Brahma covets, will now be distributed to all and sundry."

Now you take food, I go. I shall come again at the time of meal.”¹

“As soon as I opened my eyes I saw standing before me this very Vishvambhar, the son of Jagannath Mishra. He disappeared as soon as He had appeared. The ways of Krishna are mysterious. One does not know when, how and in what shape He appears. His elder brother Vishvarup used to come to me for studying Gita. Vishvambhar was then a child. He used to come occasionally to call his brother. Since he was exquisitely beautiful, he easily stole my heart and I blessed him with Bhakti. I am now happy to hear what you say. If really Krishna has appeared as the son of Jagannath, I am sure He will come to bless this poor soul.”² Advaitcharya said this and shouted ‘Haribol’ and danced. Others also shouted with him and danced.

After performing *kirtan* for some time the Vaishnavs went home. Since then whenever they happened to see Mahaprabhu Vishvambhar, they bowed down to him with deep respect. One morning, when Mahaprabhu went to bathe in the Ganga, he met Srivas and the other Vaishnavs. He bowed down to them. They blessed him lovingly by saying, “May you progress in Krishna-*bhakti*. Always think of Krishna and chant Krishna-nam. Krishna alone is true. All else is false. Without the *bhajan* of Krishna neither learning,

¹ C. Bh., 2, 2, 10 - 18.

² ibid, 28.

nor beauty, nor anything else is of any avail. Therefore hold fast the lotus feet of Krishna."

Mahaprabhu was happy to receive their blessings. He said, "You are Krishna-bhaktas and the custodians of Bhakti. You can give Krishna-*bhakti* to whomsoever you like. The only way to obtain Bhakti is to serve Vaishnavs like you." So saying he touched their feet. He carried their clothes, when they went to the Ganga to bathe. He took them from their hands to wash after they had bathed. They shouted, "Ha! Ha! What are you doing?" But he did not listen.³ Vrindavan Das says, "The Lord thus served His own servants, which He always does. There is nothing good or bad, moral or immoral, which He cannot do for them. It is true that He is just and fair and impartial. But for the sake of His devotee He gives up impartiality. An example of this is His conduct in relation to Duryodhana and the Pandavas. The devotee has the power, on account of his devotion, even to sell the Lord. An example of this is Satyabhama of Dvarka, who gave away Shri Krishna in alms to Narad. Therefore anyone, who desires to obtain Krishna should serve His servants. Lord Vishvambhar taught this by His own example."⁴

When the Vaishnavs saw that the great Nimai Pandit, whose only occupation was learning and teaching, challenging and debating, and who took special pleasure in teasing the Vaishnavs, had himself

³ ibid, 43 - 46.

⁴ ibid, 43-46.

become an ideal Vaishnav, they began to see a silver lining in the clouds of despair and despondency that hovered over the spiritual firmament of Nadiya. They pinned their hopes on him for the betterment and upliftment of Vaishnavism. They began to shower all their affection upon him and give all their blessings to him. They would say, "Vishvambhar! May you live long. May your Bhakti increase day by day. May Krishna appear in your heart and empower you to demolish the hypocrites, the enemies of the Vaishnavs, who ridicule us and our *Sankirtan* and oppress us in various ways. May it so happen that by your grace we are able to sing and dance and perform *kirtan* freely and fearlessly."⁵

Vishvambhar would be moved to hear this and say, "Your desire is bound to be fulfilled. You are all the devotees of Krishna. You will by your Bhakti make Krishna appear in Navadvip to fulfill your desire. Your enemies will be subdued. On account of you Navadvip will be converted into Vaikunth. You will bring about the deliverance of the whole world. But you must not forget me. Remember me always as your servant."⁶ So saying he would take the dust of their feet. They would again bless him.

⁵ ibid, 58 - 65.

⁶ ibid, 80 - 82.

DIVINE MADNESS

The blessings of the Vaishnavs concealed a prayer. Constant repetition of the prayer touched the divine Self of Vishvambhar. He was so filled with a divine passion to alleviate their suffering that he began to shout, "I am He, I am He! I shall destroy the enemies of My servants."⁷ The passion took the shape of divine madness. He sometimes laughed, sometimes wept, sometimes became senseless. Sometimes he climbed a tree, some times he rolled on the ground, muttering, "I will crush, I will crush the enemy."⁸

Ma Shachi was greatly perturbed. There was no end to her anxiety. She only prayed to the Lord or spoke to the neighbours and asked them what to do. No one could understand what the malady was. Most thought that it was madness. Some asked her to tie up his hands and feet. Some said she should apply *Shivaghrita*⁹ on his head, some said she should give him coconut water to drink. She sent her servant Ishan to call Srivas. As Mahaprabhu Vishvambhar saw the great Vaishnav, his *Bhakti-bhav* was aroused. Tears streamed out of his eyes. Horripilation and tremor vehemently attacked his body and he became senseless. On regaining consciousness, he made obeisance to Srivas and said, "What do you think pandit about my ailment? They say I have gone mad?"

⁷ ibid, 113.

⁸ ibid, 93

⁹ An Auruvedic medicine for madness.

Srivas laughed. He said, "Who says it is madness? It is *maha-bhakti* (Bhakti par excellence). I myself covet the kind of madness you have. Krishna is so pleased with you."¹⁰

Mahaprabhu was happy to hear this. He embraced Srivas and said, "Pandit! I am so grateful to you. If you also said that I was mad, I would have committed suicide by drowning in the Ganga."¹¹

Srivas said, "Vishvambhar! Even Brahma and Sanak, etc. aspire after the kind of Bhakti you have. I am extremely happy. Krishna has granted my prayer. We, Vaishnavs will now together perform *Sankirtan*. Let the enemies please themselves by saying what they say."¹²

He said to Shachi, "Ma! You need not worry. You are fortunate. It is not ordinary madness from which Vishvambhar suffers, but divine madness. Krishna is so merciful to him. He has given him *maha-bhakti-yoga*, which no one can understand. You should also not talk to any one about it. You will see what other mysteries Krishna now unfolds."¹³

Shachi was assuaged. But she continued to pray that her Nimai's *bhav* subsided.

¹⁰ ibid, 113 - 114.

¹¹ ibid, 115 - 117.

¹² ibid, 118 - 119.

¹³ ibid, 120 - 122.

ADVAITACHARYA'S WORSHIP OF MAHAPRABHU AS KRISHNA

One day Mahaprabhu desired to see Advaitacharya. He went to his house in Navadvip with Gadadhar. He was at that time worshipping Krishna with Tulasi leaves and Ganga water and praying to Him for His appearance to remove the suffering of the Vaishnavs and deliver the world from the bondage of Maya by preaching Bhakti. He was so excited that he sometimes raised both of his hands and shouted 'Hari, Hari!', sometimes wept, sometimes laughed and sometimes roared like a lion in anger (against the enemies of the Vaishnavs). When in anger he appeared to be the very image of Rudra. As soon as the Lord Vishvambhar saw him, he fell senseless on the ground. Advait at once recognized Him as His Lord on account of his *bhakti*. He began to say within his mind, "Thief! You have been here so long, hiding Yourself from me all along. Now You are caught. Where will You go? I am also a thief. I shall thieve against the thief."¹⁴ Thinking that the time was opportune for thieving, he sat down before him with *pushpa* (flower), *gandha* (incense), *arghya* (water), etc. required for worship. He offered them one by one on His feet, reciting the following Shlok:

*namo brahmanyā devaya go-brahmana hitaya ca/
jagadhitaya krishnaya govindaya namo namh//*
— *Vishnu Puran*

¹⁴ ibid,

He repeatedly recited the Shlok, making obeisance at His feet and bathing it with the tears of his eyes. Then with folded hands he lay down with his head touching His feet.¹⁵

Gadadhar was stupefied. Biting his tongue with his teeth he said, "Acharya! It does not become an old man like you to do this towards Vishvambhar, who is but a child in comparison to you."¹⁶

Advait said, "Gadadhar! You are too young. You will come to know everything after some time." Gadadhar was younger even to Vishvambhar. He began to wonder whether Advaitcharya meant that it was Krishna, Who had appeared in the form of Vishvambhar.¹⁷

On regaining consciousness the Lord saw Advait in a state of *bhav*. In an effort to conceal Himself He made obeisance to him, took the dust of his feet and began to praise him. He said, "I am blest to have your *darshan*. I surrender myself to you. Accept me as your own and show mercy to me. I know that Krishna sits in your heart. Your mercy implies deliverance from bondage and the attainment of the feet of Shri Krishna."¹⁸

Advaitcharya began to smile and say to himself, "You want to hide Yourself from me like a thief. You

¹⁵ ibid, 133 - 139.

¹⁶ ibid, 140.

¹⁷ ibid, 142.

¹⁸ ibid, 142.

don't know that I have already thieved the Thief.”¹⁹ Then, thinking that the Lord wanted to conceal Himself and it would not be proper to act against His wish, he laughed and said, “Vishvambhar! I love you. As a devotee, I think, you rank higher than anyone else. I want that you stay here with us, so that we may always see you and do *Sankirtan* with you. All the Vaishnavs desire your company and want to do *kirtan* with you.”

Mahaprabhu was happy to hear this. He agreed to do *Sankirtan* in the company of the Vaishnavs.

But after Mahaprabhu had gone, Advaitcharya began to doubt whether he was really Shri Krishna. “If he was Krishna,” he thought, “Why did he make obeisance to me and take the dust of my feet? Why did he surrender himself at my feet and pray for my mercy so that he might have the *darshan* of Krishna? May be he is really Krishna, but wants to conceal Himself from me. May be he is not. In any case it would be prudent to test him by going away from here and living for some time in Shantipur. If he is truly my Lord, he would pull me from there.” So he went to Shantipur.

THE BEGINNING OF SANKIRTAN

The Vaishnavs started *Sankirtan* with Mahaprabhu. They were surprised to see the extraordinary Sattvik-bhavas that appeared on his body in *Sankirtan*. Streams

¹⁹ ibid, 150.

of tears constantly flowed from his eyes. Tremor was so strong that it was not possible even for hundreds of people to hold his body. Horripilation made his body look like a golden jackfruit. The body changed shape from moment to moment. Now it was hard like a pillar, now soft like butter. Some times he laughed aloud, sometimes shouted. His shouts seemed to rend the sky. Sometimes he lay unconscious on the ground for hours. On regaining consciousness he said nothing except 'Oh! Where shall I find my Krishna?' or wept with his arm thrown round the neck of a Bhakta.²⁰ On seeing his *Sattvik-bhavs* some of the devotees thought he was not human, some thought he was a partial manifestation of Krishna, some thought he was Krishna Himself.

On repeated inquiries from the devotees regarding the cause of his restlessness, he said, "Listen. On my way back from Gaya I went to a village called Kanai-Natashala. There I saw a lad in the prime of His youth. The colour of His body was light blue like the Tamala tree. He had a peacock feather on His crown, the Kaustubha-mani on His chest, a yellow garment round His waist, jingling *nupurs*²¹ round His ankles and a beautiful flute in His hand. He came smiling to me, embraced me and went I know not where." He said this and became unconscious. On regaining consciousness he only cried, "Where is Krishna? Where is Krishna?"

²⁰ ibid, 163 - 167, 173.

²¹ A jingling ornament worn round the ankles.

The Vaishnavs tried to assuage him by saying, "You are fortunate to have been so blessed by Krishna. We are fortunate to have you in our midst. Even Vaikunth is nothing in comparison to the happiness we find in your company. You are henceforth our leader. We shall perform *kirtan* fearlessly under your patronage."²² But there was no peace for Vishvambhar. Whether in the company of Vaishnavs or without them, Vishvambhar always cried for Krishna. His tears never ceased. Vrindavan Das says, "The Ganga that flowed from the feet of the Lord started flowing from His eyes."²³ He asked everyone whom he saw, "Where is Krishna?" Everyone tried to assuage him as he thought fit. Once he asked Gadadhar where was Krishna. Gadadhar tried to pacify him by saying, "Krishna is in your heart." As soon as he heard this, he began to tear his heart with his nails. Gadadhar held his hands and pacified him somehow by saying, "Krishna is coming. He will soon be here."²⁴

Shachi was happy to see how Gadadhar managed to save the situation. She said to him, "Gadadhar, my son! You always remain with Nimai. Do not leave him for a moment."

Every day in the evening the devotees came to the house of Mahaprabhu and performed *kirtan*. *Kirtan* did not stop till morning. Everyone went into ecstasy.

²² C. Bh., 2, 2, 191 195.

²³ ibid, 198.

²⁴ ibid, 203, 208.

The sound of Mirdanga and cymbals and the shouts of 'Haribol' rent the sky. The enemies of the Vaishnavs burnt with rage, because their sleep was disturbed. They said to each other, "It seems these people have gone mad. They not only disturb our sleep, but also the sleep of the Lord by shouting so loud. Is it not possible to chant within one's own mind or in a low voice? Is the Lord pleased only by shouting? He will certainly punish them. They will all go to hell." Some one said, "This is all due to Srivas and his brothers. They will soon come to grief. I have heard that the Sultan has sent his solders by boat to arrest them. They will soon be here. When they come we shall all complain against them and ask them to burn their houses and drown them in Ganga."

The rumour regarding the imminent arrival of the soldiers to arrest the Vaishnavs spread throughout Navadvip. Srivas was scared. Lord Vishvambhar came to know this. How could He tolerate his devotees living in panic or consternation? How could they freely do *Sankirtan*, if they lived in consternation? They must know, he thought, that no one could touch them so long as He was there to protect them. Therefore he decided to manifest Himself.²⁵ Overtaken by the mood of self-manifestation he went to the bank of Ganga. As he went his gait was majestic and he was chewing betel. One of the enemies said, "The fellow does not seem to fear the Sultan and his soldiers. He is still

²⁵ ibid, 244.

loitering about like a prince." His companion said, "No, not loitering, but tricking to flee."²⁶

THE LORD'S MANIFESTATION TO SHRIVASA AS NARAYAN

On the bank Vishvambhar heard the lowing of a cluster of cows running towards the river to drink water. This reminded him of Krishna-lila and he began to shout, 'I am He, I am He', meaning thereby that he was Krishna. Shouting like that he went to the house of Srivas and began to knock at the door of the room, in which he was worshipping Nrisimha. He shouted, "What are you doing Srivasiya? Whom are you worshipping? The One, Whom you are worshipping is here. Have *darshan*." Srivas looked round. He was surprised to see before him the four-armed Lord, with conch, discus, club and lotus in His hands. He shivered to see Him, but could not speak.²⁷

The Lord said, "Srivas! You have not yet recognized Me. Hearing your loud *kirtan* and Advait's loud call I have come down from Vaikunth to protect the saints and destroy the sinners. You need not have any anxiety or fear."²⁸ He asked Srivas to do His Stuti.²⁹

²⁶ ibid,

²⁷ ibid, 252 - 262.

²⁸ ibid, 263 - 266.

²⁹ Praise.

Srivas began to shed tears and do Stuti by reciting a Bhagavat Shlok (Bh., 10, 14, 1) in praise of Krishna. As he recited, he rolled on the ground in exuberance of joy and love on seeing the Lord.

The Lord was happy to hear the Stuti. He said, "Srivas! You call your wife and children and everyone else in your house. Let them all see and worship Me."³⁰ Srivas called everyone. They worshipped the Lord with flowers, incense, etc. kept for the worship of Vishnu and with the tears of their eyes. The Lord placed His foot on their head and blessed them with Bhakti.

Then he said to Srivas, "Srivas! You are afraid, because you have heard that the Raja is coming with his men on a boat to punish you all for doing *Sankirtan*. You need not fear. I shall Myself deal with them before they get down from the boat. I shall step into the boat and you will see that I make the Raja and his men and even his elephants and horses weep and chant my Name."³¹ He added, "If you do not believe, I will presently show how I can do this." Then He called Narayani, the four year old niece of Srivas and said, "Narayani! Chant Krishna and weep." Narayani was immediately blessed with Krishna-*prem*. She lost outward consciousness, and began to chant 'Krishna' and weep. Tears freely streamed out of her eyes and drenched the ground under her feet.³²

³⁰ ibid, 295 - 296.

³¹ ibid, 317 - 319.

³² ibid, 320 - 325.

Then Mahaprabhu said to Srivas, "I hope you are now assured and your fear is gone."

Srivas replied, "Prabhu! Your Name alone makes Your devotees fearless. Now, when You are Yourself here, how can there be any cause for fear?"

Thus the merciful Lord removed the fear of Srivas by giving him *darshan* of His four-armed Narayan form. He also proved by giving *darshan* to his family and servants that He was merciful not only to His devotee but to everyone, who was in anyway related to him.

THE LORD'S MANIFESTATION TO MURARI AS BARAHA BHAGAVAN

Mahaprabhu has now renounced *Vidya-rasa* and has been swimming freely in the ocean of *Bhakti-rasa*. The waves of the ocean toss him up and down. He enjoys now *dasya-bhakti-rasa*, now *sakhya-bhakti-rasa*, now *vatsalya* or *madhura-bhakti-rasa*. The devotees recite to him Shloks relating to different kinds of Krishna-lila. He identifies himself with the Lila and, drowned in the *bhav* and *rasa* of the Lila, laughs and weeps and faints for hours.³³ Once he heard a Shlok that reminded him of his Self as Krishna. He began to shout "I am He, I am He. Where is gone Advait, who called Me. I shall go from door to door and distribute

³³ C. Bh., 2, 3, 8 - 10.

Bhakti.”³⁴ Once he heard a Shlok relating to the arrival of Akrur in Vraj. Akrur’s *bhav* became his *bhav* and he began to behave accordingly. He was heard saying in his imagination to Nand, “Nand! I have come to take you to Mathura with Ram and Krishna. You will witness the great *dhanu-yajna* going on there.”

Once he heard the *baraha-shlok*.³⁵ He was possessed with the *bhav* of *baraha-bhagavan*. Shouting, “Sukar, Sukar! (swine, swine) he went to the house of Murari Gupt. He saw in front of the altar of Vishnu a big pot full of water. He assumed the form of Baraha and picked up the pot with his teeth. He shouted like the *yajna-baraha* and asked Murari to do His Stuti.³⁶

Murari was stunned to see Baraha Bhagavan. He could not speak. The Lord said, “I have been here so long, but you did not recognize Me. Now fear not, speak.” Murari said with tears in his eyes, “Prabhu! How can I do Your Stuti? What do I know about You? Who can know You, if You do not make Yourself known. Even the Vedas do not know You well.”³⁷

Baraha Bhagavan was pleased with Murari, but expressing His anger against the Vedas, He said, “The Vedas say I am formless. In Kashi *beta*³⁸ Prakashanand

³⁴ ibid, 11 - 12.

³⁵ Shlok relating to the incarnation of the Lord as *baraha* (swine).

³⁶ ibid, 18 - 24.

³⁷ ibid, 27 - 32.

³⁸ ‘Beta’ means ‘son’, but is often used as a term of contempt.

teaches the same. He tries to chop off my hands and feet. On account of this offence he has developed leprosy. Even then he does not learn. He still has the courage to call my body illusory. Murari! I tell you a secret, which the Vedas do not know. I am the essence of the Vedas. In this incarnation I have come to preach *Sankirtan*. I shall destroy the wicked and save My devotees. I cannot tolerate the enemies of my devotees. In Baraha *avatara* I killed my son Narak, because he became enimical towards my devotees.”³⁹

In this way the merciful Lord went to the house of each one of His devotees and revealed to him the secret of His Personality. They became fearless and were enthused to perform *Sankirtan* freely day and night without caring for the enemies.

³⁹ ibid, 35 - 50.

CHAPTER X

MEETING NITYANAND

We have already quoted Vrindavan Das Thakur as saying that in this incarnation Shri Krishna did not come alone. He came with a number of His Parikaras (associates). Most of the Parikaras He had made to appear before Him. His elder brother Balaram had also appeared before Him in the form of Nityanand. Almost all the Parikaras had now come and joined Him, but not Nityanand. In *Sankirtan* Mahaprabhu always felt his absence. Before describing his meeting with Mahaprabhu it would be proper to give a brief sketch of his life since birth.

Nityanand was born in village Ekachakra of district Virabhuma (West Bengal), on Magha Shukla Trayodashi of the year 1473. He was named Kuber. Kuber was later called Nityanand. His father was Hadai, a great Pandit and devotee, and mother Padmavati. His colour was golden and he was exquisitely beautiful. It appeared from his face and eyes that a transcendental peace always reigned in his heart. As he grew it became apparent that he was not human, but divine. He did not play like the ordinary children. He collected the

boys of his age and performed Krishna-lila, Ram-lila or the Lila of any of the other Avatars with them. People were surprised to see that at his age, when he had not learned even the alphabet, he had knowledge of the Lila of all the Avatars. They had a glimpse of his true personality as Balaram or Laksaman once, when playing the part of Laksamana in Ram-lila, he was so entranced that he fell unconscious. He remained unconscious for several hours. This caused great anxiety to his parents. But consciousness was revived as soon as the boy, playing the part of Hanuman, brought Sanjivani-Booti at the behest of the boy, who was playing the part of Ram.¹

It was essential for the son of a great Pandit to become well-versed in the Shastras like him. So Hadai Pandit admitted Kuber into a *Tol*. The teachers were surprised to see his sharp intelligence and wonderful memory. At the age of twelve he became proficient in Vyakarana (Sanskrita grammar) and Nyaya. The Pandits were so pleased with his achievement that they honoured him with the title of *Nyaya-chudamani* (Crest jewel of Nyaya.)

NITYANAND'S RENUNCIATION AND PILGRIMAGE

Education made Kuber think of the futility of the world and the path that would lead to eternal peace and

¹ *Nityanand Charitamrit, Adi.1*

happiness. His parents were alarmed to see his total indifference to everything that was worldly. At this time, as if by some arrangement of the divine, there came to the house of Hadai Pandit a tall Sannyasi with lustrous face and long matted hair. Hadai Pandit and his wife made obeisance to him and requested him to stay at their house for the night. He readily agreed. Hadai Pandit and his wife served him as well as they could. The next day, when he was about to leave, he said to them, "Look, I am out on pilgrimage. I need a boy like your son to serve me. If you give him to me, you will be blessed as well as he." They were stunned to hear this. They began to think- "If we give our dear son to him, his separation will mean our death, if we do not, the indignation of the Sannyasi will mean our doom for this life and the next." They did not know what to do. They went in and began to deliberate. For sometime the dark clouds of despair and despondency continued to hover over their heads. Then a ray of divine light burst forth in their large and pious hearts, already surrendered to the will of the Lord. They were reminded of the episode, in which during his play Kuber had become Laksamana in entrancement and of the dream in which a Mahapurush had prophesied the birth of a son to Padmavati, who would deliver thousands of sinners from bondage. They felt that what was happening was according to the will of the Lord for the fulfilment of some special purpose. They thought that if they created some obstacle, they would be committing an offence at His feet. So they

went and fell at the feet of the Sannyasi and with tears in their eyes and throat choked with emotion, expressed their willingness to offer Kuber to him.

Blessed was Hadai Pandit and blessed was Padmavati. If they were not so how could Nityanand be born as their son?

Kuber accompanied the Sannyasi in pilgrimage. They together went from one holy place to another. After a few years the Sannyasi disappeared. Kuber continued the pilgrimage. When he reached Vrindavan, his heart was filled with love for Krishna. He began to wander in search of Krishna in the forests, gardens and the arbours of Vrindavan. In the state of divine madness he sometimes laughed, sometimes wept and sometimes rolled on the ground crying 'Ha Krishna! Ha Krishna!' and became unconscious.

MEETING MADHAVENDRA PURI AND LAKSMIPATI

At this time there also came to Vrindavan Sri Advaitcharya and Sripad Madhavendra Puri. They saw Kuber rolling on the ground and crying, 'Ha Krishna! Ha Krishna!' without any outward consciousness and with tears profusely streaming out of his eyes. They wondered who that young man could be, whose face radiated with transcendental light and who was so deeply drowned in the ocean of Krishna-*prem* that *Sattvik-bhava*s adorned every part of his body.

As soon as Kuber regained outward consciousness he looked at Madhavendra Puri and Madhavendra Puri looked at him steadfastly for some time. Thus looking at each other they were drowned in Krishna-*prem*. Each was drawn closer to the other and each found himself lost in each other's embrace.

After passing some time with Madhavendra Puri in Krishna-*katha* and Krishna-*lila-rasa*, Kuber again set out for pilgrimage. *Bhaktiratnakar* mentions that in Pandharapur he met Madhavendra Puri's guru Laksamipati. Laksamipati gave him Diksa in accordance with a divine mandate received in dream and named him Nityanand. After Diksa his Krishna-*prem* increased a thousand fold. Like an Avadhut intoxicated with Krishna-*prem* he went to Ranganath, Ramesvar, Nilachal, Gangasagar and other holy places in search of Krishna, but did not find Him anywhere. Then he again returned to Vrindavan.

In Vrindavan he always remained dived deep into the ocean of *bhav*, unconscious of body and its needs. Day and night made no difference to him. He neither slept nor ate. If some one gave him some milk he drank, otherwise fasted. All the time he said, 'Ha Krishna! Ha Krishna!' and wept and sometimes gave out a shriek that seemed to rend the sky.

VISIT TO NAVADVIP: MEETING GAURANG

At that time Sri Gaurang Mahaprabhu had manifested Himself as the incarnation of Bhagavan in the form of

a Bhakta. He had started *kirtan* at the house of Srivas. The shrieks and shouts of Nityanand had resounded in his heart. Occasionally, while singing and dancing in *Sankirtan*, he shrieked out ‘Ha Balaram! Dada Balaram!’

Nityanand had the inspiration that brother Kanhai¹ had appeared in Navadvip in the form of Gaurang Mahaprabhu and he set out for Navadvip.

Intoxicated with *Gaur-prem*, and swinging like a mad elephant, Nityanand was heading towards Navadvip. He sometimes wept, sometimes laughed and sometimes, imagining in his madness that Gaur was with him, indulged in loving talks with him like an Avadhut. He wore blue dress, had Tulasi and Rudraksa beads round his neck, *kundala*² only in one ear and *nupurs* round his feet. Dancing and tripping in *bhav*, he went on lightening the path with the divine lustre of his body and the resplendent beauty of his face.

On reaching Navadvip he did not go directly to Gaur. Sportive and funny as he was, he went to the house of Nandna Acharya and hid himself there. That night Mahaprabhu saw a dream. The next day, after bathing in Ganga and doing Vishnu-puja, when he went to the house of Srivas, he said to his companions, “At night I saw a dream. I saw that a tall Mahapurush, the very image of resplendent beauty, came to my

¹ Krishna.

² An ornament worn in ears.

house in a heavenly chariot. He had a *mushal*³ on his shoulder, a *kamandalu*⁴ in his left hand, and blue clothes on his head and body. He had drunk deep of the cup of love divine. He asked at the door of my house- ‘Is this the house of Nimai Pandit?’ I never saw a Mahapurush so handsome and so intoxicated with love. I asked him who he was. He replied with a smile, ‘Don’t you know that I am your brother?’ I also felt truly that he was my brother.”⁵

As Mahaprabhu talked of his dream, he was possessed with the *bhav* of Balaram. He lost outward consciousness. He began to shout, “Bring liquor, bring liquor!” The devotees were scared. Srivas Pandit said, “Prabhu! The liquor you want to drink, you already have. You are accustomed to give it to others.”

When he came to his own he said with a smile, “Two days before I told you that a Mahapurush was about to visit Navadvip. He has arrived.” Then he looked at Srivas and Haridas and said, “Go, search him out and bring him to me.”

Both went. They searched, but could not find him. How could they? Sri Vrndavan Das Thakur has said in *Chaitanya Bhagavat* that Nityanand is two difficult to be understood or recognised. No one can see or find him by himself. He alone can see him whom Sri Chaitanya shows:

³ A pestle for husking rice.

⁴ An earthen or wooden water pot used by ascetics.

⁵ C. Bh. 2, 3, 149

*bada gudha nityanand tatva ei avatare/
chaitanya dikhaye jare se dekhite pare//⁶*

Therefore Mahaprabhu himself went out with his companions to find out Nityanand. As Mahaprabhu was going he was singing Krishna-nam, with both of his hands raised. He was maddened with love, because he was going to meet his brother, from whom he was separated long ago. Tears were flowing from his eyes and his arms were restless to embrace him. Without looking this side or that, he went straight to the house of Nandan Acharya.

Mahaprabhu and his devotees made respectful obeisance to Nityanand.

Nityanand fixed his loving gaze upon Mahaprabhu. He saw the golden colour of his body, his black curly hair bedecked with flowers, his lotus-eyes full of mercy and his sweet smile full of nectar. He looked as if he was drinking his beauty with his eyes, smelling him with his nose, licking him lovingly with his tongue and embracing him with his arms. Mahaprabhu was also looking at him similarly. Both were shedding tears of love. Both were speechless and stupefied. The devotees looked now at Nityanand, now at Mahaprabhu. They were also stupefied and shedding tears.

Mahaprabhu made some gesture towards Srivas to break the silence and to make the real personality

⁶ ibid, 2, 3, 171

of Nityanand manifest. Srivas understood the gesture. He began to sing the '*barhapidam natavara vapuh*' shlok of *Srimad Bhagavat* (Bh. 10, 21, 5), which thus describes the beauty of Krishna returning from the forest with his companions after pasturing the cows:

"He wears a peacock feather on His crown, ornament of Karnika flowers on His ears, Pitambar⁷ on his body and a garland of five kinds of fragrant flowers round His neck. He is coming in the garb of a dancer, playing His flute and followed by His friends, who are glorifying Him by singing songs in His praise. Vrindavan, which surpasses Vaikunth in beauty, has become even more beautiful on account of His footprints."

On hearing the Shlok Nityanand fell unconscious. Mahaprabhu asked Srivas to chant the Shlok loudly and repeatedly. On his chanting repeatedly Nityanand regained consciousness. He stood up and began to roar and dance like a mad or drunken elephant. With each roar he jumped high and the devotees apprehended that he might break his bones. Who could check the flood-tide of Prema rising in the ocean of His heart. Mahaprabhu was standing aside and looking at this with tears streaming out of his eyes. Suddenly he extended his arms and took him in his lap. As soon as he got into his lap, he became as calm as a child, when he gets into the lap of his mother or the turbulent

⁷ Cloth of golden colour.

stream in flood, when it falls into the sea. Lying in Mahaprabhu's lap he looked at his face without blinking his eyes, as if to say that he had already surrendered to him his heart and soul, he has now surrendered his body and feels completely relieved of all burden and anxiety.⁸

Lying in the lap of brother Kanhai and drinking with the cup of his eyes the nectar of the beauty of his face Nityanand went into *anand-samadhi*. After sometime, when he regained consciousness, he stood up. Then Mahaprabhu glorified him by saying, "Today I am blessed, because I had the *darshan* of the Image of Bhakti, the essence of the four Vedas. I believe that You are the complete Shakti of Bhagavan. The Jivas attain Bhakti through Your grace. You are too difficult to understand. You are unknown and unknowable."

Nityanand smiled to hear his praise. Mahaprabhu always tried to conceal His divinity. It was in all humility as a Bhakta that He had praised Nityanand. But how could Nityanand remain without manifesting His true Personality. He held His hand with His left hand and His chin with His right and looking at Him steadfastly and lovingly said what an old poet has thus described:

O Gaur Hari!
I know Thee.

⁸ C. Bh. 2, 4, 20-22

Thou art the same Kanhai.
 But whom didst Thou give
 Thy black colour, Thy yellow clothes
 And Thy flute so sweet?
 Why left Thou Vrndavan
 And Mother Yashoda
 And came to Navadvip
 As the son of Shaci?

What could Mahaprabhu say? He cast his head down and tried to touch the feet of Nitai. But Nitai would not let him do so. He tried to touch his feet. The two wrestled for a while. But no one lost, or won, for they clasped each other in each other's arms. Nityanand said, "I went all the world round to find You, but could not. I have now found the thief. Where will He go?"

AT THE HOUSE OF SRIVAS

Mahaprabhu took Nityanand to the house of Srivas. The next day was Vyasa-puja.⁹ Therefore Adhivas *kirtan* was performed at night. Both Nitai and Gaur danced in the *kirtan*. The devotees danced round them. Nitai-Gaur were mad in love for each other; the devotees were mad in love for them. All were transported and entranced and shed tears of love. Some, not being able to control their *bhav*: rolled on the ground, some

⁹ Ceremony for worshipping the Acharya as the representation of Vyasa-deva.

shrieked aloud, some became unconscious and fell on the ground. Nitai-Gaur lost all outward consciousness. They were drunk with love and were dancing in drunkenness. The earth quaked under the feet of Nitai as it quakes in earthquake.

Dancing with Balaram in the form of Nityanand, Mahaprabhu was possessed with the *bhav* of Balaram. He roared aloud and went and sat on the altar of Vishnu. He said to Nityanand, "Get me the Hala and Mushal." Nityanand extended his hands to give Hala¹⁰ and Mushal and Mahaprabhu extended his hands to receive them. The devotees, who were closer to Mahaprabhu and enjoyed his favour, saw the Hala and Musal, while the others only saw the movement of hands. After taking Hala and Musal, Mahaprabhu was so animated with the *bhav* of Balaram that he began to shout, "Varuni, Varuni!"¹¹

The devotees began to look at one another in bewilderment. They did not know what to do. Then ingenious Srivas brought a pitcher full of Ganga-water and placed it before Mahaprabhu. He drank it happily. After drinking he became so intoxicated that it appeared as if he had really drunk Varuni. He began to give the Ganga water drunk by him to the devotees as *prasad*. The devotees drank and began to sing in praise of Balaram.¹²

¹⁰ Plough

¹¹ Liquor. C. Bh. 2, 5, 44

¹² C. Bh. 2, 5, 44

We have already said that Nityanand-tatva is too difficult to understand. Vrndavana Das Thakur has said that probably Mahaprabhu performed this *lila* only with the purpose of manifesting Nityanand.

After the emotion subsided Mahaprabhu asked the devotees, "What had happened to me? Did I do anything wrong or unseemly?" The devotees said, "No, nothing." But Nityanand was entranced to see this Lila of Mahaprabhu. He sometimes laughed, sometimes wept, sometimes shrieked aloud, sometimes danced like a child. In dance the Dand-kamandalu were forgotten, the *kaupin* fell off and he became naked, yet he remained absorbed in *bhav* and unaware of anything else. Some how Mahaprabhu made him calm down and went home. Nityanand remained at the house of Srivas.

BREAKING DAND¹³—KAMANDALU

Srivas, his brother Rami Pandit and others slept. Nityanand also lay down. But there was no sleep for him. He was still in *bhav*. At dead of night he got up from the bed. In moon-light he saw his *Dand-kamandalu*. With a roar that rent the sky he broke them.

In the morning, when Rami Pandit went to his room, he was taken aback to see the pieces of Dand-

¹³ Bamboo Staff carried by Sannyasis. Also called Sridand.

kamandalu lying on the ground. He informed Srivas and went to call Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu came. On seeing him Nityanand roared with laughter. Mahaprabhu said nothing. He picked the broken pieces of Dand-kamandalu and went to Ganga with Nityanand and the devotees. He threw the pieces of Dand-kamandalu into the river.¹⁴ Nityanand again began to dance with joy to see them flowing away with the current. Dancing he plunged into the river and began to swim. He saw a crocodile swimming and began to chase it. The devotees were alarmed to see this. Mahaprabhu shouted, "Sripad! Come. It is the time for your Vyas-puja. Don't delay." On hearing his voice he came out.

Tridand is the very prop and support of Sannyas. In it reside the thirty-three crore gods. Why did Nityanand break it? Why did he feel so happy after breaking it? Why did Mahaprabhu not reprimand him for this? Why did he with his own hands consign it to the Ganga? Perhaps Nityanand thought what was the use of Sannyas when he had found Krishna. (in the form of Sri Gaurang), for whom he had taken Sannyas. Besides in the state of Prem *vidhi-nishedha*¹⁵ are neither necessary, nor possible.

After taking bath in Ganga, Mahaprabhu went to the house of Srivas with the devotees. Srivas had made

¹⁴ C. Bh. 2, 5, 73

¹⁵ Rules and regulations regarding what one should or should not do.

all arrangements for Vyas-puja. He made Nityanand sit on the Asan and, acting as Acharya at the insistence of Mahaprabhu, started the Puja. Mahaprabhu and the devotees started *kirtan* in the courtyard. When Puja was over Srivas gave a wreath of flowers to Nityanand and said, "You offer it to Vyasadev so that He may be happy and help attain the desired end."

Nityanand took the wreath and began to look for someone, muttering something, which no one could understand. Srivas went to the courtyard and said to Mahaprabhu, "Come and see what Sripad is doing. He is not offering the garland to Vyasadev." Mahaprabhu came. He said, "Sripad! Offer the garland to Vyasadev and complete the Puja." Nityanand got up and began to dance happily and dancing threw the garland round the neck of Mahaprabhu. The devotees shouted, "Mahaprabhu-Ki-Jai!"

As if by offering the garland to Mahaprabhus Nityanand compelled Mahaprabhu to manifest His six-armed figure, holding in His six hands *shankha* (the conchshell), *chakra* (the wheel) *gada* (the club) *padma* (the lotus), *hala* (the plough) and *musal* (the pestle).¹⁶ Nityanand fell unconscious to see that form. Mahaprabhu began to roar and dance, clapping His arm against his arm-pit. After his *bhav* had subsided he caressed Nityanand fondly and said, "Get up Nityanand. Attend the *kirtan*. The *kirtan*, for which

¹⁶ C. Bh., 2, 5, 92-93.

you have incarnated, is now manifest. What more do you want? If you want to distribute *prem-bhakti*, do it. That is your own treasure. You can give it to whomsoever you like. No one can get it without your mercy. The one favoured by you is favoured by Me. The one, who does not enjoy your favour or is not well disposed towards you, does not also enjoy My favour inspite of all the *bhajan* practised by him.”¹⁷

On regaining consciousness Nityanand began to look at Mahaprabhu with tears of love streaming down from His eyes. Mahaprabhu embraced Him and both began to sing and dance.

NITYANAND, MA SHACHI AND MALINI

The next day Mahaprabhu took Nityanand to his house. He said to his mother, “Look Ma! I have brought my elder brother Visvarup.” As Ma Shachi looked at Nityanand, she said with joyful surprise, “Oh yes! He looks exactly like Visvarup.” She asked Nityanand, “Are you really my son Visvarup?”

“Yes Ma, I am your son Visvarup,” replied Nitai. Shachi hugged Nitai close to her heart, kissed him and bathed him with the tears of her eyes. Then she said, “My son! Why did you turn so cruel and run away from home to make me weep so long? But anyway, now that you have come back like a good son, take care of your mad Nimai. My anxiety is over.”

¹⁷ C. Bh. 2, 100-103

Nimai was mad, but Nitai excelled even Nimai in madness. Drunk deep with the wine of love, he lived at the house of Srivas as a child. He called Srivas "Baba" (father), and his wife Malini 'Ma'. Like the fond child of his parents he would sometimes be obstinate, sometimes angry or happy on a trifle. He sat in Malini's lap and sucked at her dry breasts like her child. He ate only when she fed him with her own hands.

Everything about him was extraordinary or supernatural. Once he was standing in the court yard of Srivas and eating something. At that time a crow came and flew away with a small pot containing *ghee* which was used as lamp for the Thankura. Malini began to grieve. Nityanand could not see her grief. He began to call the crow and say, "Brother crow! Come. Give me my lamp and take my crumb." And lo! The crow came and gave the lamp.

This reminded Malini of the original form of Nityanand as Sankarshana. She thought of it and became unconscious. On regaining consciousness she began to sing a hymn in His praise as Sankarshana:

"Oh my Lord! You support infinite Brahmanands on Your head as Shesha; You destroyed the entire family of Ravan as Laksman; You pulled the river Kalindi near You with your plough; You brought the son of Your guru Sandipani Muni alive from Yamalok. Getting the lamp back from the crow is but a trifle for You."¹⁸

¹⁸ C. Bh. 2, 11, 47-49, 53-56

CHAPTER XI

ADVAITACHARYA'S REALIZATION OF MAHAPRABHU'S DIVINITY AND OTHER EPISODES

Mahaprabhu's *Sankirtan-lila* has now begun. Nityanand's arrival has added to the zest and charm of Kirtana. But three more stalwarts have yet to join the team. They are Advaitcharya, Haridas and Pundarik Vidyanidhi. Mahaprabhu would not rest until they have also come. Advaitcharya would not come until he is convinced of the Bhagavatta (divinity) of Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu's *Bhagavad-bhav* has now ceased to be something new. It appears frequently.

MAHAPRABHU CALLS ADVAIT

It is in *Bhagavad-bhav* that Mahaprabhu one day said to Sriram, the younger brother of Srivas, "Sriram! You go to the house of Advaitcharya in Shantipur. Tell him that the One, for Whose appearance he has practised Sadhana with devotion, has appeared and has called him with his wife and necessary materials for worshipping Him."

Sriram was happy beyond description. He went happily, tripping and dancing, to convey Mahaprabhu's message to Advaitacharya. Advaitacharya had already heard about all that was happening in Navadvip and at the house of Srivas. There was no end to his happiness. But he did not easily want to set aside the doubt, on account of which he had come away from Navadvip to Shantipur. As soon as he saw Sriram, he said in dramatic style, "Sriram! I know why you have come. Am I so stupid as to make a God of a boy, as you are all doing? Which Shastra has spoken of an incarnation of Bhagavan in Navadvip?"¹

Sriram said, "You know the Shastras. But listen what Bhagavan has said. He has said that on hearing your piteous calls He has come from Golok to distribute *prem-bhakti* and He has called you with your wife. Acharya! How fortunate you are." As he said this tears trickled down his eyes.

On hearing this Advaitacharya could not keep up his dramatic stance. He sprang up with joy. He began to dance and clap his hands and say with tears streaming out of his eyes, "Oh! He has come! My Lord, my life and soul has come! He has called me!" He quickly collected the materials for worship and set out with his wife for Navadvip.

While he was on the way, another thought current passed in his mind. He said to Sriram, "Rami! I am

¹ C. Bh., 2, 6, 24

going to the house of Nandan Acharya. You go and tell Bhagavan that Advaitcharya has not come. Let me know how He reacts. The son of Jagannath Misra must place His foot on my head, if He wants me to see Him as Bhagavan.”²

Mahaprabhu was waiting at the house of Srivas for the arrival of Advaitcharya. He was sitting on the altar of Vishnu. Nityanand was standing behind Him, holding the umbrella over His head, Narahari was fanning *chamar*.¹ All others were standing before Him with folded hands. He said, “Advaitcharya is hiding in the house of Nandn Acharya to test me. Bring him here at once.”

Rami was about to go to Mahaprabhu. Even before he went another person reached the house of Nandan Acharya to say to Advaitcharya that Mahaprabhu had called him immediately. This made Advaitcharya’s doubt almost disappear. He started for the house of Srivas with his wife, shedding tears of joy. The thought that he was going to meet his Lord, for Whose *darshan* he had aspired, wept and cried so long, at His call made him so overwhelmed with *bhav* that his tears did not stop and he could not walk. Still he was moving along, staggering and falling and thinking what Bhagavan would be like and how and what he will do to see Him.

² ibid, 56

¹ The tail of a Tibetan yak, used as fly-brush.

As soon as he reached the house of Srivas, he saw that the house and everything inside the house was radiant with supernatural light and on the altar was seated in place of Nimai a most beautiful person, surrounded by millions of gods, singing praises to Him. Advaitacharya and his wife were so stupefied, stunned and over-awed to see His Aisvarya² that they could not even make obeisance to Him.³ But their doubt regarding the divinity of the son of Jagannath totally disappeared for ever. This is the reason why Mahaprabhu showed His Aisvarya to him. But when He saw him frightened and benumbed He withdrew His Aisvarya and appeared before him in the form of an exceedingly beautiful youth and asked him with a smile to come near Him. On his going near He said, "Look Acharya! You were grieved to see the suffering of the fallen souls. To remove their suffering you practised a long course of arduous Sadhana and invoked Me. I have come. Now what is there to worry? You can now distribute Prem freely and fearlessly."

Advaitacharya began to shed tears. He said, "Prabhu! You are independent and willful. Who can invoke and attract You without Your will?" Then he and his wife worshipped Him according to the rituals as prescribed in the Shastras and sung His Stuti (praise). Mahaprabhu was pleased. He placed His foot upon the head of both of them and asked them to ask

² Lordly grandeur

³ C. Bh., 2, 6, 75-92.

for some boon. Advaitcharya said, "Prabhu! After I have had Your *darshan* what boon remains to be asked for? But if You must give me a boon, I request for the boon that while distributing Prem-*bhakti* You will not neglect anyone because he is low."⁴

Prabhu said, "This boon is granted." Then he said, "Acharya! Now you dance. I shall see."

Was it possible for an old, highly honoured and learned Mahapurush like Advaitcharya to dance before everybody, specially when he did not know how to dance? But he was so overfilled with joy and *bhav* that he was himself feeling like dancing. On being ordered by Mahaprabhu he was further induced to dance. So he raised both of his arms and began to twist and dance. Bhagavan enjoyed the dance of His Bhakta.

ADVAITCHARYA IS BLESSED WITH THE DARSHAN OF KRISHNA

Advaitcharya went back to Shantipur. After sometime he again became skeptical. To remove his doubt he went to the house of Srivas. Mahaprabhu was there at that time. But he was not in Bhagavad-*bhav*. Advaitcharya whispered something into the ear of Srivas. Mahaprabhu said, "What are you both secretly talking about? Will you not tell me? Srivas said, "Advaitcharya says that You did not show him the

⁴ C. Bh., 2, 6, 161.

same form of Yours, which you showed to Nityanand. He is, therefore, unhappy.”

Mahaprabhu said to Srivas, “Pandit! It is not in my power to show any form or *aishvarya* at any time. I do not know how and what happens to me sometimes. So how can I show him my Shyamsundar form? If he wants to see it, he should close his eyes and meditate. If Krishna wants He will show His form to him.”

Mahaprabhu said this in jest. Advaitacharya also closed his eyes in jest and sat down as if he was meditating. But as he did so, he became unconscious and breathless and horripilation appeared all over his body. On regaining consciousness he began to look all round, as if he had lost something invaluable.

Srivas said, “Acharya! What is the matter?”

“What shall I say. This person sitting before me entered my heart and assumed the form of Shyamasundar. After giving me *darshan* in that form He assumed His own form and came out.” Acharya then began to describe the beauty of Shyamsundar. Everyone listened like one spell-bound. Everyone felt that He was spraying nectar from his mouth.

Mahaprabhu said, “Acharya! While meditating you went to sleep. In sleep you saw a dream. Why do you blame Me?”

“Dream?! I clearly saw you entering my heart and coming out. I have now understood fully that You are my Lord, Whom I have worshipped so far.”

SQUABBLE BETWEEN MAHAPRABHU AND ADVAITCHARYA FOR THE DUST OF EACH OTHERS FEET

Advaitcharya began to pass his days happily with the group of Bhaktas that surrounded him. But he was unhappy for one reason. He was unhappy, because he could never take the dust of the feet of Mahaprabhu. On the contrary Mahaprabhu took the dust of his feet, when he did not have *Bhagavad-bhav*, because he revered him as his guru.⁵ Both used to squabble in this connection, but Advaitcharya had always to suffer defeat. One day when Mahaprabhu had lapsed into Prem-samadhi and lost outward consciousness, Advaitcharya rubbed the dust of his feet all over his body.⁶ After Mahaprabhu regained outward consciousness, he started dance and *kirtan*. While dancing he said, "Today I am not enjoying the bliss of dance as usual. Someone must have taken the dust of my feet. Let me know who did it."

Advaitcharya said, "Prabhu! When the thief does not get a thing he desires, he steals it. I am the thief, who stole the dust of your feet. Forgive me. If you can not tolerate this, I will never do it again."

Mahaprabhu pretended to be angry and said in a theatrical tone, "Acharya! You are the custodian of limitless treasure of Prem-Bhakti, still you have greed

⁵ C. Bh., 2, 16, 41.

⁶ C. Bh., 2, 16, 52.

for it. You did not feel pity in stealing the Prem of an insignificant person like me, so poor in Bhakti.⁷ Very well, if you are a thief, I am no less than a thief. I am a dacoit." As he said this, he forcibly caught hold of the feet of Advaitcharya and rubbed it against his forehead.⁸

Then he said, "Acharya! You are the custodian of Prem. By applying the dust of your feet to the body one gets Krishna-*prem*. Why are you so miserly in giving it?"

In this way Mahaprabhu often forcibly took the dust of the feet of Advaitcharya. This pained Advaitcharya beyond limit. How could he give the dust of his feet to One, Whom he had seated in the temple of his heart as the deity, he worshipped? He said in his mind, "Prabhu! Who says that you are merciful? Don't you by giving so much respect to this poor creature pierce his heart with a sharp knife? I will not let you do this again. I shall compel you to disrespect me as much as you respect me. I shall do something, which will compel you to pound me with your feet."

Advaitcharya went to Shantipur from Navadvip and began to preach against Bhakti. He knew that that was the best way of displeasing Mahaprabhu, because the very purpose of His incarnation was the preaching of Bhakti. Every day in the gathering of devotees he

⁷ C. Bh., 2, 16, 69-70.

⁸ C. Bh., 2, 16, 73-75.

read *Yogavashishta* and tried to prove that *jnana* was superior to *bhakti*.

Omniscient Mahaprabhu came to know about this. Possessed by Bhagavad-*bhav* and fuming with rage, one day he went to Shantipur with Nityanand. Pouncing upon Advaitcharya he said, "O Advait! Tell Me which is superior, *jnana* or Bhakti."

"*Jnana* is superior," replied Advaitcharya at once.⁹

As soon as Mahaprabhu heard this, he started showering blows upon him with his fist and pounding him under His feet.¹⁰ Advaitcharya's wife Sita Devi shrieked out, "Prabhu! What are You doing? The old man will die. What fault has he committed?"

But Mahaprabhu continued the thrashing. He threw him on the ground and sat on his chest and began to say, "Fault? Calling Me from Golok for preaching Bhakti, now betraying Me by extolling *jnana* over Bhakti!"

After thrashing Advaitcharya right and left Mahaprabhu went out and sat at the door.

Advaitcharya got up and began to dance with joy, looking at Mahaprabhu and saying- "I am blest, I am blest! You are my Lord, I am Your servant. You have accepted me as Your servant and behaved accordingly. The servant has committed fault and You have punished him. This is just as it should be. You used to

⁹ C. Bh., 2, 16, 132.

¹⁰ C. Bh., 2, 16, 133-134.

pretend ingeniously that You were lowly and asked for my blessings, did my Stuti and took the dust of my feet. Where has now gone Your ingenuity, Your humility, Your Stuti, Your dacoity? Instead of doing my Stuti and asking for my blessings You have rebuked and punished me. Instead of forcibly taking the dust of my feet, You have forcibly rubbed the dust of Your feet all over my body. I am blest, I am blest!”¹¹

Mahaprabhu’s anger subsided to see the dance of Advaitacharya and to listen what he said. He smiled and tears trickled down his eyes.

On seeing this Advaitacharya fell at His feet, bathed His feet with tears and said, “Prabhu! You have blessed me by giving punishment. Now give me the shelter of Your feet.”

Mahaprabhu lifted and clasped him close to his heart and said in a voice choked with emotion, “Acharya! I give you this boon that a man, who takes shelter under your feet even for a moment, will be dear to Me., even if he has committed a thousand offences against Me.”¹²

At this time the Bhagavat *bhāv* of Mahaprabhu vanished. Like one who had just awakened from sleep, he said, “Acharya! Did I show any impertinence? In case I did, kindly excuse me. I am like Your son Achyut. If I do anything wrong, you must chastise

¹¹ C. Bh., 2, 16, 152-162.

¹² C. Bh., 2, 16, 168-169.

me.” Advaitcharya, Nityanand and Haridas laughed to hear this. Then he understood that he had done something wrong. He again apologized to Advaitcharya with folded hands.

After Mahaprabhu had stayed with Advaitcharya for a few days he returned to Navadvip and took Advaitcharya and Haridas with Him. Nityanand had already become an inseparable part of the assembly of Vaishnavs in Navadvip. With the arrival of Advaitcharya and Haridas, new life was infused into it. Nityanand and Advaitcharya became the principal pillars of the Bhakti movement started by Mahaprabhu. Therefore Vrindavan Das Thakur has said in *Chaitanya Bhagavat* that they were the two arms of the Sri Vigraha of Mahaprabhu.

PUNDARIK VIDYANIDHI

One day Mahaprabhu began to weep and shriek aloud, “Pundareek! Ha Pundareek! Where are you? I can no more bear your separation. I do not know when I shall be blessed by your *darshan* and my heart will be at peace.” Gadadhar and the other devotees also began to weep to see him wailing like this. They said to him, “Prabhu! Who is that fortunate devotee on account of whom you are so restless?”

Mahaprabhu said, “Pundarik Vidyanidhi is a rich devotee of Chattagram. There is no one in the three worlds, who may compare with him in devotion. I cannot live without his *darshan*.”

Soon after one day Pundarik came from Chattagram to Navadvip. Gadadhar went to see him with Mukund. They found him seated like a prince, wearing silken clothes, on a bed covered with a milk-white bed sheet. Big pillows were placed on either side of him and on his back. His long hairs were oiled and combed properly. The oil filled the room with delicate fragrance. There was a golden betel-box placed by his side and he was chewing betels. On his either side stood servants fanning him with fans of peacock-feathers.

He received both the guests with reverence and made them sit close to him. He knew Mukund, because he was also from Chattagram. Therefore he asked him to introduce Gadadhar to him. Twenty-two years old Gadadhar was not only handsome, his face was radiant with the supernatural lustre of Bhakti. Therefore Vidyanidhi kept gazing at him for some time. But as Gadadhar looked at him, he felt disappointed and disillusioned. He said to himself, "Is he a devotee or the very image of worldliness and sensuousness?" He said to Mukund, "Mukund! You should not have brought me here."¹³

Mukund laughed within himself. In order to make Vidhanidhi appear in his true self before Gadadhar he repeated in melodious voice the following Shlok of Srimad Bhagavat:

¹³ C. Bh., 2, 8, 11 - 12.

*"aho bakiyam stanakalakutam jighamsaya
 payayadapyasadhvi/
 lebhe gatim dhatryuchitam tato 'nyam kam va
 dayalumsharanam vrajema//"*

— Oh! Who can be so kind as Krishna? Putana came to Him with the nefarious purpose of killing Him by making Him suck at her breast besmeared with poison. Yet He gave her the same position after death in the spiritual world as He would to His wet nurse. To whose feet, therefore, should we surrender, except His?"

As soon as Vidyanidhi heard the Shlok he fell unconscious on the ground. When he regained consciousness, he began to weep and wail saying, "Ha Krishna! My Lord, the Soul of my soul! When will You show mercy on me? There is not a trace of Bhakti in my heart. Will You, therefore, never show mercy on me?" As he wailed he rolled on the ground. His clothes and hair were stained with dust. On seeing this the fire of penitence began to burn in the heart of Gadadhar. He hugged Mukund close to his heart and said, "You have done me a great favour by bringing me to such a devotee. But I committed a great offence by disrespecting him in my mind. I have now decided to take Diksa from him so that he may forgive me by considering me as his own." As he was saying this tears incessantly streamed out of his eyes. When Pundarik Vidyanidhi regained consciousness, he saw Gadadhar weeping. He locked him in his arms and

began to wipe his tears. When Mukund told him about his decision, he said, "It is a matter of great pride and satisfaction for me that he has taken this decision. This cannot be the fruit of any amount of good deeds performed by me in the past. It can only be due to the causeless mercy of Krishna." On the next Shukla Dvadashi day Vidyanidhi gave Diksa to Gadadhar.

MAHAPRABHU'S BOON TO SRIVAS

Avadhut Nityanand was always mad with Krishna-prem. He was fidgety and restless. He sometimes laughed, sometimes wept, sometimes talked and behaved like a madman. But he was guileless, simple-hearted and loving. He loved everyone and everyone loved him. For Srivas and his wife Malini, he was their fond child.

One day Mahaprabhu said to Srivas, "Srivas! Why do you always keep this Avadhut at your house? Who knows what is his caste and what is the family to which he belongs."¹⁴

Srivas said, "Do you want to test me Prabhu? It does not behove you to do so. Any one, who has worshipped you even for a day, is my life and soul. As for Nityanand I know that he is your own body and non-different from you. Even if in his outward behaviour he ever appears to have taken to wine and debauchery and even if he destroys my life, wealth,

¹⁴ ibid; 13 - 16.

caste and everything else, he will not cease to be adored by me.”¹⁵

Mahaprabhu shouted with joy, “What did you say Srivas? You have so much faith in Nityanand! Nityanand is so deep and difficult to understand and you know him so well. Therefore I am pleased with you and I give you the boon that even if Lakshmi has to beg from door to door, you will never suffer poverty. Everyone in your family, including even your dog and cat will be blessed with my Bhakti. I entrust Nityanand to you. You take care of him as best as you can.”¹⁶

SHACHI'S DREAM

Shachi once said to Mahaprabhu, “O Nimai! I saw a wonderful dream early this morning.”

“What did you see Ma?” asked Mahaprabhu with curiosity.

“I saw you and Nityanand, both about five years old, fighting with each other. After sometime you went into the Thakur’s room and came out with the images of Krishna and Balaram, Nityanand holding Krishna and you Balaram. Then all the four began fighting in front of me. Ram-Krishna said to you angrily, “You hypocrites, who are both of you? Why have you come? Get out from here. Don’t you know that this house, this milk, curds, *sandesh* and everything else is ours.”

¹⁵ C. Bh., 2, 8, 18 - 22.

¹⁶ A small drum-like instrument.

Nityanand said, "Oh! Those days are gone when you stole and plundered milk, curds and butter. Now it is not the cowherds who rule, but the Brahmins. Now know yourself and run away from here, leaving all these offerings for us, otherwise we shall beat you." Balaram roared out, "Very well, now no one should blame me. I shall bind you both hypocrites. I swear by Krishna that I shall do that." Nityanand said, "Why should I fear your Krishna. My God is Sri Gaurasundar, Visvambhara." Thus they began to fight and eat everything by snatching from each other. Then Nityanand called me and said, 'Ma! I am hungry. Give me to eat.' I woke up. I do not understand what the dream means."¹⁴

Mahaprabhu said, "Ma! It was a good dream. Our Thakurs are live Thakurs." Then pretending to be very grave, he said in a low tone, "Ma! I tell you a secret. Everyday the *bhog* offered to the Thakur became half. Everyday, as I saw the *bhog* remaining half, I wondered who ate the missing half. Then a doubt came to my mind. I thought that it was your daughter-in-law, who secretly ate the half. Ma! How shameful! Is it something that can be spoken about? Because I felt so much ashamed on account of it, I did not even speak to you. Today my doubt is removed on account of your dream."¹⁵

¹⁴ C. Bh., 2, 8, 28-44

¹⁵ ibid, 45-49

Vishnupriya, who was standing by, was listening. She laughed shyly. Shachi said, "Stop it. Naughty boy! Does my daughter-in-law suffer from any want so that she may have to steal in order to eat?"

"Well Ma! Let us not talk of this any more," said Mahaprabhu. "I tell you another thing. In this dream Nityanand asked you to give him something to eat. So let us today give him to eat the best things we can. I am going to invite him." Mahaprabhu went to invite Nityanand. Shachi and Vishnupriya started cooking.

MAHAPRABHU'S MANIFESTATION OF SHIVA-FORM

One day, when Mahaprabhu was busy in Krishna-katha with the devotees, a beggar came to his house, singing the song of Shiva. He played *damaru*¹⁷ and danced as he sang. He was so inspired to hear the song that he assumed the form of Shiva, having long matted hair and playing *damaru* and *shinga*.¹⁸ With a jump he sat on the shoulders of the beggar and shouted, "I am Shiva, I am Shiva!" On regaining outward consciousness he got down from his shoulders and gave him alms with his own hand. The beggar was blessed.¹⁹

¹⁷ Horn used for blowing.

¹⁸ ibid, 96 - 105.

¹⁹ *Kadacha*, 9 , 11, 16 - 17.

Murari Gupt writes that when sitting on the shoulders of the beggar Mahaprabhu was seen riding a big bull as Shiva. The bull was chanting 'Ram-nam'.²⁰ Kavikarmapura writes that at that time Srivas was reciting *Girisha-stotra* and Mukund was reciting *Mahinina-stotra*.²¹

²⁰ *Mahakavya*, 7, 89.

CHAPTER XII

SANKIRTAN AT THE HOUSE OF SRIVAS

One day Mahaprabhu said to the Vaishnavs, "Brethren! Why should our nights go waste. Let us from today do *Sankirtan* at nights and bathe in the Ganga of Bhakti every day, so that the world is purified by hearing Harinam and we attain the lotus feet of Krishna."¹

The Vaishnavs felt happy and energized. The thought that they would perform *kirtan* every night in the company of Mahaprabhu as their leader, filled them with a new hope and there was a new upsurge of *bhav-bhakti* in their hearts. They began to perform *Sankirtan* every night at the house of Srivas and occasionally at the house of Chandrashekhar.² Nityanand, Gadadhar, Advait, Srivas, Vidyanidhi, Murari, Haridas, Shukalambar, Gangadas, Vanamali, Jagadanand, Buddhimant, Vasudev, Govind, Gopinath, Jagadish, Sriman, Sadashiv, Vakreshvar, Purusottama and a number of other devotees of Mahaprabhu participated in the *Sankirtan*.

¹ C. Bh., 2, 8, 106 - 109.

² ibid, 111.

Mahaprabhu sang and danced in the middle of *Sankirtan*, the devotees danced and sang round him. On account of the sight and company of Mahaprabhu dancing in *bhav*, the devotees were also swept by an unprecedented wave of *bhav*, which made them weep and roll or fall senseless on the ground. As Vrindavan Das Thakur visualizes the dance, he is inspired to say, "Oh! That wonderful dance! The dance of the Lord, Whose Name Narad and Shuka sing always, and Whose Name delivers even sinners like Ajamila from bondage! Oh! How I wish I were born at that time to see that dance!"³

"Blessed is the age of Kali, in which Bhagavan danced Himself, chanting His own Name in the *bhav* of His own Bhaktas. He finds that *bhav* so absorbing and maddening that it makes Him forget His Bhagavatta (divinity). Dancing in that *bhav*, He forgets His *aishvarya*, His Shankha (conch), Chakra (discus), Gada (club) and Padma (lotus), His Garuda and His Kaustubha. He forgets the happiness of Vaikunth and the company of Laksmi. In exuberance of the joy and bliss caused by that *bhav*, He rolls on the ground, or takes the dust of the feet of the devotees and throws His arm round them and weeps."⁴

"What can explain the importance of that *bhav* more than the fact that Bhagavan Himself assuming

³ C. Bh., 2, 8, 190 - 200.

⁴ ibid, 201 - 205.

that *bhav*, takes the dust of the feet of His own *bhaktas* and craves for their blessings, so that he may have *bhakti* like them? The people, who neglect *bhakti* and desire anything else, neglect nectar for the sake of poison. The pandits, who teach Shastras, if they do not teach *bhakti*, do not understand the Shastras. They only carry their load on their back like donkeys.”⁵

The kind of Sattvik-*bhavs* Mahaprabhu had, while dancing in *bhakt-bhav*, are no where to be found in the Shastras. His body some times became hard like a pillar and it was impossible to bend any part of it. Sometimes it became soft as butter. Sometimes his limbs became two or three times bigger and some times two or three times smaller than their size.⁶ Some times he was filled with the *bhav* of Krishna. Dancing in that *bhav*, he looked at each one of his associates and called him by the name he had in Krishna-lila, like Shiva, Shuka, Prahlada, Narad, Uddhav, In this way he disclosed who amongst his companions in this Lila was who in Krishna-lila.⁷

SANKIRTAN AND THE ENEMIES

The sound of *khol* and *karatal* played in *Sankirtan* accompanied by the occasional sound of ‘Haribol’ and the shout of Mahaprabhu in *bhav*, which was like a

⁵ ibid, 206 - 210.

⁶ ibid, 219 - 222.

⁷ ibid, 224 - 227.

thousand lions roaring together,⁸ rent the sky and made their enemies shiver with fear and burn with rage. They were also filled with curiosity and wanted to know what exactly was going on inside the house of Srivas. They came and knocked hard at the door, but the door did not open. They said to one another, "Nimai has started a new way of worship. What nonsense! Is it worship to sing and dance the whole night and disturb the sleep of neighbours?" Some said, "No, not worship, these people are Tantriks. They drink wine and do God knows what inside. That is why they do not open the door." Some said, "The new religion of dancing and singing cannot be allowed by the Muslim rulers. When the Kaji comes to know about it, they would certainly be punished." Some said, "Nimai was so good and intelligent. But in the company of these people he has lost his brain, learning and everything." Some said, "We do not know where this Avadhut Nityanand has come from. It is his company and that of Advait that has spoiled him." Another said, "No, it is Srivas, who is responsible for all that is going on in Navadvip. We may all have to suffer on account of him at the hands of the Muslims. We must burn his house and wipe out all trace of his existence from the face of Earth to stop this nonsense."⁹

⁸ C. Bh., 2, 8, 168.⁹ C. Bh., 2, 8, 233 - 272.

GOPAL CHAPAL

People, who could not find entrance into the house of Srivas at the time of *Sankirtan* contrived various means to punish and defame him.¹⁰

One day a spiteful and wrathful Brahmin, named Gopal Chapal, kept before the door of Srivas at night materials used by Tantriks in the service of goddess Bhavani and a pitcher full of wine.¹¹ In the morning, when Srivas saw this, he called some noble-minded persons of the neighbourhood and said to them laughingly, "Look, I have called you so that you may see these things and be convinced of my greatness as a worshipper of Bhavani."¹² The neighbours said, "This must be the work of some wicked person" and cursed him in sympathy with Srivas.

After three days Gopal Chapal developed a serious type of leprosy all over his body on account of the offence committed by him against a Vaishnav. Blood oozed out of his body and insects crawled over it. The pain he suffered was unbearable. He was turned out of his house by his wife. He began to live under a tree on the bank of Ganga.¹³

One day Gopal Chapal saw Mahaprabhu going to the Ganga. He said to him, "Prabhu! According to our

¹⁰ C. C., 1, 17, 31 - 32.

¹¹ ibid, 33 - 36.

¹² ibid, 38.

¹³ ibid, 41 - 43.

village-relationship I am your maternal uncle, you are my nephew. I am suffering badly from leprosy. Your incarnation is for removing the suffering of people. Kindly relieve me of this suffering.”¹⁴

It is true that Mahaprabhu came to relieve the suffering of people and he relieved their suffering for all times by delivering them from bondage and even gave them *Krishna-prem* without taking into consideration the offenses committed by them. But he did not do so in some cases to impress upon people the gravity of offenses committed against Vaishnavs and the importance of the Vaishnavs. In the case of Gopal Chapal he adopted a different attitude. He said with a roar of anger, “Sinner! You have committed the worst of all sins by offending a devotee. I shall not relieve your suffering. I shall let the insects feed on your body life after life. Life after life you will go to hell. My incarnation is to serve my devotees and preach Bhakti and to destroy the sinners like you.”¹⁵

However the most merciful Mahaprabhu became merciful to him later. When he came to village Kuliya in Navadvip after his Sannyas, Gopal Chapal again prayed to him. He said, “You have committed offence against Srivas. You can be relieved, if he forgives you.” He prayed to Srivas and was relieved of his suffering by his mercy.¹⁶

¹⁴ ibid, 44 - 45.

¹⁵ ibid, 47 - 49.

¹⁶ ibid, 51 - 55.

MAHAPRABHU'S MANIFESTATION OF AISHVARYA

Sankirtan at the house of Srivas continued for one year.¹⁷ We know from the Mahakavya of Kavikarnapura that Mahaprabhu performed *Sankirtan* at the house of Srivas every day at night from the first part of the month of Magha after his return from Gaya till his renunciation.¹⁸ During this period many *aishvarya-lilas* were performed by him.

One day while dancing at night in the house of Srivas, he suddenly took all the Shalagrama Shilas in his lap and went and sat on the altar of Vishnu three hours before dawn and began to speak about his *tattva*.¹⁹ He said, "In Kaliyuga I am Krishna, I am Narayana, and Devikinandna. I am the Lord of the infinite Brahamandas. I am each one of the deities you adore. You are all my servants.²⁰ I have come down from Vaikunth for you. I have eaten what you offered—milk, curd, butter and everything else. Now bring what more you have. I am hungry." The devotees were happy. They brought different kinds of dainties and he ate them happily. He continued to ask for more and eat whatever they brought till they were tired and scared and did not know what to do.

¹⁷ ibid, 30.

¹⁸ *Mahakavya*, 4, 76.

¹⁹ Substantive reality.

²⁰ C. Bh., 2, 8, 286 - 287.

They stood before him with folded hands and said, "Prabhu! You have the infinite Brahamandas in your stomach. Our poor offerings to You are meaningless and we are ashamed of them."

"No, No," said Prabhu, "The devotee's offerings are never poor and meaningless. Come, bring whatever more you have. Bring at once."

"We have only betels²¹ left," said the devotees.

"Do not worry. Bring betels."

The devotees happily began to offer betels. He ate them happily from the hand of each, and began to ask them to ask for any boon they liked.²²

In this way after making merry for sometime in *aishvarya-bhav*, he became unconscious. On regaining outward consciousness, he began to weep with his arm thrown round one of the devotees. In this state he addressed the devotees as "My brother" or "My dear friend." The devotees laughed to notice the change and wondered.

After a little while he came down from the altar. As soon as he came down, he became unconscious and lay lifeless on the ground. The devotees thought he had left the body and disappeared. Being unable to bear the agony of separation they began to say that they would also commit suicide. The omniscient Lord

²¹ Betels are eaten at the end of the meal.

²² ibid, 289 - 311.

then sat up and began to shout 'Haribol!' The devotees were happy beyond measure. They also began to shout "Haribol!"²³

During this one year long period in which Mahaprabhu performed *Sankirtan* at the house of Srivas the wheel of His divine Lila moved fast and many important episodes took place, which we shall now describe separately one by one.

²³ ibid, 318 - 324.

CHAPTER XIII

THE GRAND MANIFESTATION OF DIVINITY

The most important episode that occurred during the period of *Sankirtan* at the house of Srivas was what is known as Mahaprakash or the grand manifestation, because in this episode Mahaprabhu gave *darshan* to a number of devotees in the form of the particular deity they worshipped. It is also called *Sata-prahariyabhav*, because this manifestation lasted for seven *praharas* or twenty-one hours at a stretch.¹

ABHISHEK

One day Mahaprabhu went to the house of Srivas with Nityanand. The devotees also assembled there. Mahaprabhu made a gesture to the devotees to start *Sankirtan*. *Sankirtan* began. During *Sankirtan*, instead of dancing, as usual, Mahaprabhu went and sat on the altar in *Bhagavad-bhav*. On other occasions, when he manifested *Bhagavad-bhav*, he lost consciousness of

¹ C. Bh., 2, 9, 1 - 11.

himself as Gaurnga. This time he did not lose consciousness of himself. But he sat on the altar as the deity Gaurnga and asked the devotees to do His *abhisheka*.² The devotees began to bathe Him with *abhisheka-mantras*. Advaitcharya and Srivas recited the *purusha-sukta*³ while bathing. He was bathed with more than a thousand pitchers of Ganga water amidst the sound of Mantras and the shouts of 'Haribol!' The servants and maid-servants of Srivas brought water from the Ganga for bathing. They were blessed, because they got an opportunity to serve the Lord as the result of their service to a devotee of the Lord.⁴ After bathing the devotees worshipped Him with the ten-lettered Gopal-mantra and did His Stuti. Then He Himself asked for something to eat. The devotees happily brought different kinds of fruit, sweets and other things to eat. He ate them all. After eating the offerings made by the devotees, He surprised them by telling them certain things about their past.

MERCY ON SRIVAS

He said to Srivas, "O Srivas! Do you remember that once you went to the house of Pandit Devanand to hear him teaching *Bhagavat* to his students. On hearing *Bhagavat*, which is full of *prem-rasa*, you were

² Bathing with sacred water at the time of installation of a deity.

³ Rg-veda hymn.

⁴ C. Bh., 2, 9, 25 - 39.

overwhelmed with *bhav* and began to weep aloud. Neither the teacher nor the students understood your *bhav*. The students dragged you out. Devanand did not prevent. You sat in a lonely place, very much grieved at heart for not being able to hear *Bhagavat*. At that time I came down from Vaikunth, sat in your heart and recited Shrimad *Bhagavat*. You were again overwhelmed with *bhav* and began to weep. The ground was flooded with your tears.”⁵ As Srivas heard this he was overwhelmed with *bhav*. Tears of love and gratitude began to flow from his eyes.

MERCY ON GANGADAS

The Lord then said to Gangadas, “Do you remember that one night you were trying to flee from Navadvip with your family on account of fear of being persecuted by the Muslim Raja. You came to the bank and began to look for a ferry. You could not find any. When the night was about to end you began to weep, because you were afraid that the Muslims might come and disgrace your family in your presence. The situation was so painful that you began to think of committing suicide by drowning in the Ganga. How could I rest in Vaikunth to see you in such a plight. I came to you in the guise of a boatman with a ferry. You breathed a sigh of relief to see me. You said in utter desperation, ‘Brother! Ferry me and my family across and purchase

⁵ *ibid*, 96 - 100.

me, my life, my body and soul. I shall give you one *tanka* (rupee) and a pair of *dhoti* and *chadara* to wear.' I ferried you across the river and then came back to Vaikunth. Don't you remember?"⁶

As Gangadas heard this, he was so filled with love and gratitude that he could not say anything and fell senseless on the ground.

The day passed like this, the Lord making merry with the devotees and the devotees serving Him in various ways, some fanning, some offering betel, some dancing in front. At the onset of night the devotees performed *archan* (worship) with incense, flowers, etc, *khol* and *karatal*. The Lord sat quietly enjoying the *archan*. At the end He said, "Call Sridhar." The devotees did not know who was Sridhar and where he could be found. He said, "Go to the end of the city. You will hear someone chanting My name. Know him to be Sridhar."⁷

KRISHNA-DARSHAN TO SRIDHAR

We have already made a mention of Sridhar, the poor vegetable vendor, who earned his livelihood by selling the leaves of banana tree, *thod*⁸ and other vegetables. There was also another means and a more important

⁶ *ibid*, 109 - 117.

⁷ Bh., 2, 9, 135 - 137.

⁸ The delicate inner portion of the trunk of banana tree, which is eaten as vegetable by Bengalis.

means by which he lived. That was *kirtan* of Harinam. He could live without food for twenty days, but he could not live a moment without Harinam. He chanted Harinam throughout the day and almost the whole of night. No one knew when he slept. At night he chanted loudly. The people, who were against the Vaishnavs and Bhakti, said, "The fellow is poor. He does not get food to eat. He shouts and yells at night on account of hunger."⁹

Sridhar had his shop in Vamanapukur. He used half of what he earned by selling vegetables for purchasing flowers and sweets, etc, for Ganga-worship and the rest for his own maintenance. Even while he appeared to be busy selling vegetables at the shop, his *nam-japa* and *smarana* went on. Therefore he could not talk much with the customers. His prices were fixed. There was no room for bargaining. The customers knew that he was honest and truthful like Yudhishtir and never charged more than what was just and fair. Therefore they did not bargain.

But he had a customer, who always bargained and wrangled. He was Nimai Pandit. He went to the market with his students. Talking and jesting with the shopkeepers and making fun all the way, he went to the shop of Sridhar. He said to him, "Sridhar! How much for this?" Sridhar mentioned the price. Nimai

⁹ C. Bh., 2, 9, 146 -150.

paid half the price and picked up the banana or radish. Sridhar tried to snatch it. Nimai did not leave. A tug of war ensued. The passers by assembled to watch the fun. Nimai said, "Sridhar! What are you doing? I am a Brahman boy and you are trying to snatch away a thing that belongs to me. You are a wealthy person. If you give something to me, what harm would come to you? You are on the other hand, trying to rob me. You do not know who I am."¹²

How could Sridhar know if Prabhu did not want to be known? In the tug of war Sridhar kept looking at the charming face of Nimai like one spell bound and forgot everything. Nimai laughingly walked away with the vegetable. Sridhar did not become angry.¹³

Another day Nimai went to his shop and picked up a banana or Mocha.¹⁴ Sridhar said, "Brahmana Thakur! Excuse me. I am your dog. Do not tease me." Nimai said, "Not a dog, you are very clever. You have earned lots of money by selling Mocha. Why not give one Mocha to me. If you cannot give like this, take some money."

"Do you ever give the full price? Why not take it from another shop at lower price. Aren't there other shops?"

¹¹ C. Bh., 2, 9, 140.

¹² C. Bh., 2, 9, 161 - 167.

¹³ *ibid*, 168.

¹⁴ The flower of the banana tree. Mahaprabhu was fond of the vegetable prepared from it.

"There are, but I am not the customer, who would change shops. Sridhar! Don't you know who I am? I am the Father of the Ganga, you worship every day."¹⁵

"Vishnu! Vishnu!" Sridhar said and closed his ears. Knowing that Nimai was naughty and irksome, he got rid of him by giving away the *mocha*.¹⁶

Vrindavan Das Thakur says that Bhagavan thus snatches a thing from the hands of a devotee even if he does not want to give. He does not even look at a non-devotee, who has plenty to give.¹⁷

To avoid the wrangle Sridhar agreed to give Mahaprabhu a *thod* and *mocha* every day free of cost. Eating everyday the *thod* and *mocha* supplied by Sridhar Mahaprabhu ran into debt. The debt had to be cleared some day. The day had now arrived. So he asked the devotees to go and bring him.

The devotees went and said to him, "Sridhar! You have been called by Bhagavan. Jagannath Misra's son Nimai has manifested Himself as Bhagavan and is giving *darshan* to the devotees." Sridhar had heard that Nimai, who used to wrangle with him for banana, *thod* and *mocha* had manifested Himself as Bhagavan. He wanted to go and have His *darshan*. But he did not have the courage to do so on account of his humility and lowliness. Now when he heard that

¹⁵ *ibid*, 179.

¹⁶ *ibid*, 180.

¹⁷ C. Bh., 2, 9, 185.

Bhagavan Himself had called him, he was so much overwhelmed with *bhav* that he fell senseless on the ground. The devotees carried him in that condition and laid him before Mahaprabhu.

Mahaprabhu said, "Sridhar! Rise and have My *darshan*."

On hearing Mahaprabhu's voice his consciousness was revived. He saw his old customer, Jagannath Misra's son sitting before him. But the very next moment he saw him appearing as Sri Krishna with the flute in His hand, the peacock feather on His crown and a smile on His lips. He also saw Ananta Dev holding His thousand heads above Him to serve as His umbrella and the four-faced and five-faced Brahma and other gods and goddesses doing His *Stuti*.¹⁹ On seeing Sri Krishna he was again going to become unconscious. But the nectar that flowed into his ears in the form of Krishna's sweet words prevented him from losing consciousness.

Sri Krishna said, "Sridhar! You have always suffered poverty and privation. I shall give you the *ashta-siddhis*."

Turning a deaf ear to what He said, Sridhar began to say, "Prabhu! You had disclosed Your identity to me by saying, 'I am the father of the Ganga, you worship every day' Still I could not recognize You.

¹⁹ C. Bh., 2, 9, 190 - 194.

Kindly forgive me. Prabhu! There are so many people, who would give you every thing they have and feel blest. You do not accept anything from them. I showed reluctance on Your asking for banana-leaves from me and You had to forcibly snatch them. Prabhu! I do not know how much offense I have committed at Your feet. Kindly forgive me.”

Sri Krishna said, “Sridhar! I always think that I have my claim on a thing that belongs to my devotees. Therefore I snatch it from them. You can now ask for any boon you like in return for all the things I have snatched from you. If you want I can make you the King of....”

Sridhar interrupted and said, “Prabhu! I do not want any boon.”

Prabhu said, “Very well. Then sing a *stuti* (hymn of praise) to me.”

“Prabhu! I am an unlettered nincompoop. How can I sing a *stuti*? ”

“Sridhar! Every sentence that you speak is a *stuti*. I give you the boon that goddess Sarasvati²⁰ may sit on your tongue.”

Then Sridhar started doing Stuti. At the end of the Stuti he divulged a secret of Bhakti-yoga by saying, “Prabhu! Even though You are the Lord of infinite *brahmandas* (universes), You have one great weakness.

²⁰ The goddess of learning.

You are subjugated by Bhakti. By the power of Bhakti You were defeated by Bhishma, bound by Yashoda and sold by Satyabhama. On account of Bhakti You had to carry on your shoulders Radha on the night of the Rasalila and Sridam, when You were defeated by him in a game. A man always hides the weakness on account of which he is defeated by others. Therefore You always concealed Bhakti. This time Your Maya, which enables You to conceal Bhakti, did not work. Therefore, as You see, every one is asking for Bhakti and You are compelled to give it away to every one freely. What the result will be can be easily foreseen. In the past the people, who defeated and bound You by their Bhakti, were only a few. This time You would be bound by one and all.”²¹

After hearing the Stuti, Prabhu said, “Sridhar! You must ask for a boon. My *darshan* must not go in vain.”

When repeatedly Prabhu insisted on Sridhar’s asking for a boon, he said, “Prabhu! If You must give a boon, give me this boon that the Brahman boy, who snatched from my hand the leaves of the banana tree and *thod* may give up his restiveness and sit quietly in my heart as the Lord of my heart.” As he said this his throat became choked. With tears flowing from his eyes he fell at the feet of Prabhu.

Prabhu said, “So will it be.”

As soon as Sridhar heard this he became senseless

²¹ *ibid*, 212, 218.

and was lost in the resplendent beauty of Mahaprabhu he saw sitting in his heart.

RAMA-DARSHAN TO MURARI

Mahaprabhu said to Murari, "Murari! Look at me." Murari saw instead of Mahaprabhu his Ishta Shri Ram sitting before him with Sita on His left, Lakshmana on His right and a number of monkey chiefs standing all round. Murari fell senseless on the ground. Mahaprabhu said, "O Monkey!²² Do you forget that Ravan once burnt you and you burnt his city. You are the same Hanuman and I the same Ram. You are my life and soul. Murari! Now get up and see Lakshman, whose life you saved by bringing the Gandhamadana mountain.²³ See Sita, for whom you wept so much, when she was carried away by Ravan."²⁴

Murari regained consciousness and began to weep. Mahaprabhu said, "Murari! Ask for whatever boon you want." Murari said, "Prabhu! I do not want anything. I only want that I should never forget that You are my Lord and I am Your servant. I want that whenever and wherever You appear with Your eternal associates,

²² Murari was an incarnation of Hanuman.

²³ At the time of Rama's battle with Ravan, who had abducted Sita, Lakshmana fell unconscious on account of being struck by a powerful arrow. He was saved by a herb found on this mountain, which Hanumana brought.

²⁴ C. Bh., 2, 10, 7 - 16.

I should be born with them and serve You. I want that I should always sing Your praise in their company.”²⁵

Mahaprabhu said, “I grant you this boon.” Everyone shouted “Jai Mahaprabhu!”²⁶

MERCY ON HARIDAS

Merciful Mahaprabhu then showed mercy on Haridas. He called Haridas and said, “Haridas! Come and have my *darshan*. Your body is dearer to me than mine. My heart breaks when I remember how the Muslims mercilessly flogged you. They dragged you from place to place and thrashed you harder and harder so as to kill you. I could not tolerate this. I came down from Vaikunth with my *chakra* (discus) to chop off their heads, but could not, because even at that time you were praying for them. Your prayer made me desist from doing any harm to them. I covered your back with Mine and allowed it to be lashed. If you do not believe, you can see the marks of the lashes upon my back even now.” So saying Mahaprabhu turned His back towards Haridas.²⁷

Haridas was so much moved that he fell senseless on the ground. Mahaprabhu said, “Rise, rise Haridas. Have my *darshan* and ask for a boon of your choice.”

²⁵ *ibid*, 19 - 24.

²⁶ *ibid*, 25.

²⁷ *ibid*, 2, 10, 38 - 45.

Mahaprabhu's words revived his consciousness, but instead of having *darshan*, he wept and rolled on the ground. After he had somehow composed himself, he said, "Prabhu! I am the greatest of all the sinners and lowliest of the lowly. I do not deserve to have Your *darshan*. As for boon I do not want anything except that"

"Yes tell Me, tell Me what you want. There is nothing that I cannot give You."²⁸

"Prabhu! Since I have not done Your *bhajan* and I do not deserve to have the privilege of serving You, I desire that You may kindly give me the privilege of serving those, who have done your *bhajan*. I want that life after life You may kindly make me the dog of a Bhakta, so that I may keep watch over his house and eat the remains of the food eaten by him. Prabhu! I know that this also is a privilege, which I hardly deserve, and that I am committing an offense by asking for it. But I hope that on account of your infinite kindness you would kindly excuse me for committing this offense."²⁹

Mahaprabhu said, "Dearest Haridas! Since you do not want anything, I give this boon to those, who have lived with you or talked with you even for a short while, that they will all attain Me. I always live in your body. One who has faith in you has faith in Me. My divinity and My lordship are meaningful only due to the

²⁸ *ibid*, 4.

²⁹ *ibid*, 85 - 92.

devotion of My devotees like you. You have by your devotion made Me captive in your heart for ever.”³⁰

MERCY ON ADVAITACHARYA

Mahaprabhu sat all along on the altar shedding light like a thousand moons from His body, while Nityanand stood behind Him holding the *chatra* (umbrella) over Him. He looked at Advaitacharya with a smile and said, “Acharya! Do you remember how, before my incarnation, one night, when you were fasting, because you could not understand the meaning of a Gita-shlok, I explained the meaning to you and made you break your fast? You used to explain Gita to the devotees and explained each Shlok according to Bhakti. When you could not explain a Shlok in terms of Bhakti, you fasted. I could not see you fasting in grief. Your fast means My own fast, your grief means My own grief. I therefore, appeared to you in dream everytime you fasted and explained the meaning of the Shlok and asked you to break the fast. In this way I explained to you the meaning of all the Shloks, about which you had any doubt. But I did not explain one Shlok, which I explain now.

“The Gita Shlok 13/13 creates a doubt in your mind because of its incorrect reading. The words *sarvatah panipadantat* usually found in the Shlok are not correct. The correct reading is *sarvatra*

³⁰ C. Bh., 2, 10, 93 - 97.

*panipadantat.*³¹ ‘*Sarvartah panipada*’ means all hands and feet, that is, the hands and feet of all the jivas. This is interpreted by the impersonalists to mean that the hands and feet of the jivas are superimposed upon Brahma, Who does not have hands and feet of His own, which is not supported by Srutis. ‘*Sarvatra*’ means everywhere. It implies that Brahma is present everywhere with His hands and feet, that is, He is present everywhere in His personal form.”

Mahaprabhu then asked Advait to ask for some boon. Advait said, “Give me the boon that in this incarnation You will not ignore the lowly and the fallen. You will be as merciful to them as to any one else.” The boon was readily granted.

MERCY ON MUKUND

Mahaprabhu was then pleased to raise both of his hands and say smilingly to everyone, “All of you have My *darshan* and ask for any boon you want.”

Everyone asked for the boon he wanted and Mahaprabhu happily granted. But Mukund remained waiting outside. He did not have the courage to come in on account of his humility. Mahaprabhu also did not call him. Everyone was surprised why Mahaprabhu ignored him, even though he was His favourite singer and He loved to hear his *kirtan*.³²

³¹ *ibid*, 115 - 130.

³² *ibid*, 174 - 177.

Srivas said, "Prabhu! We do not understand why You have ignored Mukund, who is so dear to You and to all of us. Whose heart does not melt to hear his *kirtan*? He also does not lack in Bhakti. What offence has he committed, on account of which You do not show mercy on him? Kindly call him and let him have Your *darshan*."³³

Mahaprabhu said, "Srivas! Do not say that again. That fellow does not deserve My mercy. He is not firm in Bhakti. "You do not know how fickle-minded he is. He identifies himself with the people in whose company he sits. He becomes a devotee with the devotees and a *jnani* with the *jnanis*. In the company of the devotees he adopts *dasya-bhav* and becomes humble like a blade of grass; in the company of the *jnanis* he says "*so 'ham*" (I am Brahma). When he says so I feel that he strikes on My back with a *lathi* (staff). Such a person can never have my *darshan*.³⁴ Those, who regard *jnana* and *karma* as superior to *bhakti*, or equivalent to *bhakti*, strike me with a *lathi* and commit an offense against *bhakti*. They do not deserve my mercy."³⁵

Mukund heard this from outside. He felt so reproachful that he resolved to commit suicide. Before committing suicide he wanted to know whether he would ever have the *darshan* of Prabhu. He said in a

³³ *ibid*, 178 - 181.

³⁴ C. Bh., 2, 10, 185.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 191.

loud tone, "Srivas! I have got the right punishment for my offense. You need not pray to Mahaprabhu for me. But kindly ask Him whether I shall ever have His *darshan*."³⁶

Mahaprabhu heard. He replied, "Mukund! You will get my *darshan*, but after a crora (ten million) births."³⁷

"I will get, I will get!" Mukund shouted and began to dance with joy. He was happy to have been assured that he would have *darshan* even though after a very long period.³⁸

Mahaprabhu's heart melted. Tears came out of his eyes. He said in a choked voice, "Mukund! Come in and have my *darshan*.³⁹

But how could Mukund hear? He was mad with joy to think that he would have Prabhu's *darshan* though after one crora births. He was so absorbed in the thought of the promised *darshan* that he forgot all about the one crora births, all about himself and everything else and remembered only *darshan* and felt that he was actually enjoying *darshan*. The words of Mahaprabhu did not reach him, because he was in a state of trance. The devotees brought him in. His consciousness was revived by their touch. He made obeisance to Mahaprabhu by lying prostrate before Him. Mahaprabhu raised him with His hands and said,

³⁶ *Ibid.* 197.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 199.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 201-202.

"Mukund! I had told you that I shall give you *darshan* after one crora births. But on account of your firm faith, sincere *bhav* and devotion towards Me, your one crora births have taken place and passed in a moment. I am pleased with you. You are my eternal servant. Can I ever give you any punishment? I had performed this Lila only to teach the world through you that the people, who for the sake of reconciliation regard *bhakti* as equal to *jnana* and *karma* commit an offence against *bhakti* and cannot have My *darshan*."⁴⁰

Mukund said, "Prabhu! You want me to have Your *darshan*. But I am like the insect of the drain completely devoid of *bhakti*. How can I have Your *darshan* without the eyes of *bhakti*? You showed Your Vishvarup to Duryodhan, still he could not have Your *darshan* for want of Bhakti. On the other hand he had to die and the rest of his family. Hiranya and Kamsa saw Krishna, yet they could not see, because they lacked *bhakti*, while Kubja, the gardner, and the washerman, who saw Krishna while He was on His way to the amphitheater of Kamsa, had His *darshan* on account of *bhakti*. The sage Vyasa wrote many *shastras*, describing religion according to Veda, and keeping the secret of *bhakti* more or less to himself. But he was at peace only, when, on the advice of Narad, he openly described *bhakti*".⁴¹

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 207-210.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 215-238.

Mahaprabhu said, "What you said is true. Without *bhakti* my *darshan* is meaningless. I have described in the Vedas how different kinds of *sadhana* are spiritually beneficial and fruitful. That is all true. But the fruits yielded by them are meaningless without *bhakti*. I have the power to prevent them from yielding those fruits, if I am not pleased. But not even I can prevent *bhakti* from yielding its natural fruit, which is not only my *darshan*, but my complete subjugation by my Bhakta.⁴² Mukund! I give you this boon that in each of my incarnations you will be born as my singer."

On hearing the boon granted to Mukund everyone shouted 'Haribol!'

Thus on the Mahaprakash day each one of the devotees of Mahaprabhu had the *darshan* of Bhagavan in the form worshipped by him and each got the boon he desired. Mahaprabhu also gave to everyone the betels chewed by Him as His prasad.⁴³ Even the servants and the maid-servants of Srivas got His *darshan*, *prasad* and the *prem-bhakti*, which Brahma and the other gods and goddesses covet, but cannot get.⁴⁴ They were all blessed. But the vain-glorious pandits of Nadiya, who had read the Shastras, but were devoid of Bhakti, remained the slaves of Maya, they were.

⁴² *Ibid*, 249-251.

⁴³ *ibid*, 289.

⁴⁴ *ibid*, 277.

CHAPTER XIV

DELIVERANCE OF JAGAI-MADHAI

NITYANANDA AS ANAND

We have seen how Malini in her Stuti of Nityanand once described him as Samkarshan, Laksaman, Balaram and Shesh, who supports infinite *baramandes* over his head.

Malini's Stuti² gave a complete description of the personality of Nityanand. But Mahaprabhu later described his true self as Anand bliss. He said, "Nityanand is Anand in name, Anand in form. He is the very personification of Anand. His entire behaviour, eating, drinking, moving and whatever else he does, is full of Anand.³ Sometimes he dives so deep in the ocean of Anand that he remains unconscious for three or four days.⁴ Sometimes he does not have any clothes at all on his body and he is not aware of it. He is so

¹ C.Bh., 2, 11, 47-49, 53-56.

² Hymn of praise.

³ C.Bh., 2,12, 19.

⁴ Ibid, 2, 12, 9.

much absorbed in his self as Anand that he cannot talk intelligently. His replies to questions are meaningless. I say 'Sripad! Why are you naked?' He replies, 'Yes, yes.' I say. 'Put on clothes.' He replies, 'I am hungry.' I say, 'I ask you something. You say something else. Why do you do so? He replies, 'Yes, yes. I went ten times.'⁵

Avadhut Nityanand was as simple, unassuming and sportive as a child. He sometimes played with the children of Nadiya, sometimes went to Shachi Ma and behaved towards her like a fond child. Once charged by a current of divine madness he was running towards the house of Mahaprabhu. On the way his *kaupin* fell off. He picked it and tied it round his head. Stark naked he reached the house of Mahaprabhu.⁶ Mahaprabhu and Vishnupriya were at that time sitting in the courtyard. Shachi Ma was inside. Vishnupriya hurriedly went in and closed the door from inside. Shachi became suddenly apprehensive and asked, "Why? What has happened?" Vishnupriya said, "Go and look at your elder son." Shachi went out and began to laugh to see Nityanand.

Mahaprabhu tied his turban round Nityanand's waist.⁷ He made Nityanand sit by his side and asked, "Sripad! Where are you coming from? Your body is

⁵ ibid, 2, 11, 71, 74, 76.

⁶ ibid, 2, 12, 11-12.

⁷ ibid, 2, 12, 15.

covered with dust." Sripad said, "Yes, yes" and began to look around like one who was mad.

At that time came the companions of Mahaprabhu one by one. Mahaprabhu said to Nityanand, "Sripad! Give me your *prasadi kaupin*." Nityanand gave. Mahaprabhu worshipfully tied it round his head. Then he tore it into a number of small pieces and gave a piece to each of his companions and said, "Keep this carefully. It is a valuable *prasadi*. Tie it round your head and you will attain Krisna-*bhakti*."⁸

After that he washed the feet of Nityanand, applied sandal paste to his body and worshipped him with flowers. He took his *charanamrita* and gave it to others and said, "Now we have attained Krishna-*bhakti*. We are blest."

THE DELIVERANCE OF JAGAI-MADHAI

One day Mahaprabhu called Nityanand and Haridas and said, "Look, the time has come for the deliverance of the Jivas of Kali. From today you go door to door and ask for the *bhiksa*⁹ of Harinam. You chant Harinam and ask everyone to chant. Do not say anything else. In the evening you come and let me know what you got in *bhiksa*."¹⁰

Nityanand was already restless for the deliverance of the Jivas. There was no end to his joy on receiving

⁸ ibid, 2, 12, 22-26.

⁹ Alms.

¹⁰ C. Bh., 2, 13, 7-8.

this injunction from Mahaprabhu. He took Haridas with him and began to go into the lanes and bylanes of Nadiya, chanting Harinam and requesting the people to chant.¹¹ If someone did not chant, they said to him with folded hands and tears flowing from their eyes, "Brother! If you do not want to chant repeatedly, chant but once so that we are sold out to you for ever." Some acceded to their request, some did not. Some laughed and said, "Oh! They have gone mad. Nimai Pandit was already mad. Now many others have come under his influence and have gone mad." Some even abused and threatened to beat them. But they went on chanting undisturbed and requesting the people to chant with still greater determination and enthusiasm. In the evening they went to Mahaprabhu and told Him everything about the expedition.¹²

Nityanand heard about Jagai-Madhai, the two brothers, who called themselves the Kotavalas¹³ of Nadiya.¹³ They pitched their camp at different places in Navadvip, which they called their Thana¹⁴ and harassed the people of the locality in different ways to collect money from them. They were Brahmins, but there was no crime, which they did not commit. They

¹¹ C.Bh., 2, 13, 18-20.

¹² C.Bh., 2, 13, 21-30.

¹³ Police officers in charge of Nádiya. Some think that they were actually the Kotavalas, but they used to bribe the Kaji heavily on account of which he had given them freedom to do what they liked.

¹⁴ Police station.

committed theft, dacoity, adultery, and murder. They did not hesitate even to kill cows and Brahmins. They ate meat and were always drunk. As soon as people saw them coming from a distance, they tried to hide themselves from their view. They were the greatest enemies of *sadhus* and *sannyasis*. Nityanand's heart melted for them. He thought, "Prabhu has asked me to preach Harinam to all, specially to the sinners and the fallen. Where shall I find people more fallen than them?" He said to Haridas, "Dada Haridas! You are so powerful and fearless and by nature so kind and merciful that though you were dragged into the markets and lashed right and left for chanting the Name of the Lord, you prayed to the Lord to forgive the offenders. This time if you decide in your mind to bring about the deliverance of Jagai and Madhai, I am confident that Prabhu will certainly fulfill our desire."

Haridas laughed and said, "Sripad! Don't I know that your desire is the desire of the Lord? Since you have desired their deliverance, there is no doubt that they will be delivered."

Both started that day towards the place, where Jagai-Madhai had camped. Both were tall and handsome; both were dressed in saffron as *sannyasis*; both were shedding tears from their eyes as they went singing:

*"Bol Krishna, bhaja Krishna, laha Krishna nam/
Krishna Mata, Krishna pita, Krishna han pran//"*

*Toma sabha lagiya Krishnera avatar/
Hena Krishna bhaj saba chada anachar//*

— Say Krishna, think of Krishna, and chant Krishna nam

Krishna is your Father, Mother, your life and all.

Krishna has come for your sake to deliver you all.

So surrender to Him, do not anything that is wrong”.

Ch. Bh. 2, 3, 83-84.

People were surprised to see them singing and advancing in this manner towards the place, where Jagai-Madhai sat drunk as Lords of Nadiya, and began to say to each other, “Oh! Who are they? Are they mad? Why are they going in that direction singing and dancing? Do they not care for their life? Have they decided to die at the hands of those drunken demons?” Some said to Nityanand, “Sripad! If at all you care for your life, please keep away from that bee-hive.” But why should Nityanand listen.

As soon as Jagai-Madhi saw them, they roared out, “Who are you, shouting like this? Don’t you know Jagai-Madhai? Wait, we shall teach you a lesson of your life.”

As Nityanand and Haridas saw them coming they fled. They fled, because their immediate purpose was only to create the background for their deliverance. They wanted them to be delivered by Mahaprabhu

Himself, so that his divinity and power became manifest and people surrendered to him.

On seeing them fleeing, Jagai-Madhai ran after them like cats after the mice. Nityanand was fleeing fast, but the old Haridas was panting heavily as he followed him.

Haridas knew that Nityanand was all-powerful and he was safe in his hands. But pretending to be angry with him, he said pantingly, "Oh! Why did I obey Avadhut? Having fallen into his hands I am now going to fall into the mouth of death."

Nityanand also said in a jocund mood, "Haridas! Why blame me? Blame your Prabhu, whose order has led to this. He sits at home and issues orders to his followers like a king to go from door to door and chant *Harinam*. He orders and we have to execute. Obedience to him means our death, disobedience also means death. In either case we have to die. Such is our Prabhu. What can we do? So he is to blame, not I."¹⁵

As the two reached the house of Mahaprabhu, they quickly went in. The drunkards in their drunkenness could not see them. Having lost their view they began to fight with each other.

Mahaprabhu was at that time talking with the devotees. As soon as He saw Nityanand and Haridas rushing in breathlessly, He said, "Sripad! Why are you

¹⁵ C. Bh., 2, 13, 101-107.

breathless? It seems that your expedition today was very tiresome. But did you get anything in *bhiksa*?"

"Why not? We never got so much *bhiksa* before."

"Tell me what you got."

"What shall I say Prabhu about what I got in *bhiksa*? I got my life."

"Life! What do you mean? Why not say clearly?"

Then Nityanand told Mahaprabhu the story of his chanting Harinam to Jagai-Madhai and their running after his life.

"Who are Jagai-Madhai?" said Mahaprabhu in terrible excitement.

Srivas and Ganga Das, who were there, said, "Prabhu! You are omniscient. You know everything. It is beyond us to describe how sinful they are and how much they torment the people of Nadiya."¹⁶

"I know, I know. Let them come. I shall send them to Yemapuri¹⁷ this very moment."¹⁸

Nityanand said, "Prabhu! You are called *Patit-pavan* or the purifier of the unholy and sinful. This name will be meaningful only if you purify them instead of killing them. I have resolved that I shall make you do so."¹⁹

¹⁶ C. Bh., 2, 13, 120-125.

¹⁷ The region of Yama, the Regent of Death.

¹⁸ Ibid, 126.

¹⁹ Ibid, 127-131.

Then Mahaprabhu laughed and said, "Sripad! If you have desired their purification or deliverance, you should think that they are already purified. In fact they were purified the moment they had your *darshan*."²⁰

The devotees were pleased to hear this. They glorified Mahaprabhu and went home. Haridas went with Advaitcarya to his house. He said to him, humorously deploring his association with Nityanand, "Acarya! I am fed up with Nitai. I cannot say anything to Mahaprabhu. He takes me along with him for *Nam-bhiksa*. But he is always intoxicated like a drunkard. I do not know what liquor or intoxicant he takes. In the midst of *Nam-bhiksa* he performs different kinds of Lila. He sometimes jumps into Ganga and begins to chase the crocodiles; sometimes he rides a bull and says, 'I am Shiva. Worship Me'; sometimes he milks someone's cow and drinks milk; sometimes he plunders a cowherd and eats up his curd. When I forbid, he says, "Go and tell your Acharya. What can he do to me?" What he did today you have already seen. He took me to those drunkards for *Nam-bhiksa*. We would have died at their hands, if the Lord were not particularly merciful upon us."²¹

Advaitcharya also said in the same strain, "No surprise. If the drunkard does not go to the drunkard to whom would he go? You will see how he soon makes them drink his own liquor and makes them like

²⁰ Ibid, 132-133.

²¹ Ibid, 136-148.

himself. Then the two brothers, Nimai-Nitai will dance with them. Thus they will lose their caste. We shall also risk our caste in their company. Let us both flee from here, if we want to save our caste and our prestige.”²²

Once Jagai-Madhai pitched their camp at a *ghat*²³ near the house of Mahaprabhu, where he and his devotees used to bathe. The devotees were frightened. No one went to bathe before dawn. Even during the day they did not go to bathe alone, but in parties of ten or twenty. At night when Mahaprabhu and his devotees performed *kirtan*, Jagai-Madhai thought they sang the song of Mangal Chandi, the goddess whom the Tantriks²⁴ worshipped, and rejoiced to hear it. They drank liquor again and again and danced with the beats of *mridanga*. During the day when they saw Mahaprabhu going to the Ganga to bathe, they said, “Nimai Pandit! You are good at singing the songs of Mangal Chandi. Your singers are all experts in singing. We shall meet them. Let there be a festival at the close of the ceremony. Do not bother about the provisions (meat and wine). We shall arrange for everything.”²⁵

Nityanand thought that that was a good opportunity for the deliverance of Jagai-Madhai. One

²² Ibid, 149-156.

²³ Place for bathing on the bank of a river.

²⁴ Those who pursue the rites as prescribed in the Yantras, the sacred books, enjoining the worship of Shiva and Durga.

²⁵ C. Bh., 2, 13, 161-171.

day as he was returning at night with Haridas after Nagar-Kirtan, he deliberately passed by their side, doing Nam-Kirtan. Madhai shouted, "Who is that?"

"I," replied Nityanand. "I am going to the house of Mahaprabhu."

"What is your name?"

"Avadhut."

As soon as he heard 'Avadhut', Madhai hit him hard on the head with a pitcher. His head began to bleed.²⁶ But he looked pityingly at Madhai and said, "Brother Madhai! You have beaten me, so what. Take the sweet Name of the Lord but once and purchase me as your servant for ever."

Jagai's heart melted to hear this. But Madhai was all the more infuriated. He was going to beat him for the second time, when Jagai caught hold of him and said, "Stop. What will you gain by beating the Sannyasi?" This saved Nityanand.²⁷

In the meantime the people of Nadiya went and reported everything to Mahaprabhu. He came along with his companions. He was filled with rage to see blood oozing out of Nityanand's head. Immediately he cried aloud, "Chakra! Chakra!" to invoke *Sudarshan Chakra*. The Chakra appeared.²⁸ The two brothers saw the Chakra and began to tremble with fear.

²⁶ C. Bh., 2, 13, 178.

²⁷ C. Bh., 2, 13, 180-182.

²⁸ Ibid, 185-186.

Nityanand said, "Prabhu! Be calm. Give me the bodies of these two brothers in *bhiksa*.²⁹ They have not deliberately done any harm. What Madhai did was due to intoxication. Jagai did not do anything. On the other hand he saved me, when Madhai was going to hit me the second time."

The tide of mercy flowing from the heart of Nityanand turned the mind of Mahaprabhu. On hearing that Jagai saved Nityanand, Mahaprabhu clasped Jagai close to his heart and said, "By saving Nityanand you have purchased me for ever. Tell me what I should give you in return." But in his eagerness to give him something he did not wait even for his reply and said, "I give you *Prem-bhakti* right now." Such is the causeless mercy of Mahaprabhu. The highest treasure, which he could give, the treasure, which even Brahma aspires after, which the Rishis cannot get even after life long Sadhana, he gave to a sinner even without his asking. The devotees cried aloud, "Jai Mahaprabhu! Jai Jagai!"³⁰

As soon as Mahaprahu gave Prem-Bhakti to Jagai, he fell unconscious. Mahaprabhu then said, "Jagai! Look at me." He regained consciousness and saw His four-armed figure with *shankha*,³¹ *chakra*³², *gada*,³³ and

²⁹ Ibid, 189.

³⁰ Ibid, 190-194.

³¹ Conch-shell.

³² Wheel (*Sudarshana Chakra*).

³³ Mace.

*padma*³⁴. On seeing Him in this form, he again became unconscious. Mahaprabhu placed His foot over his chest and he regained consciousness. He held His foot close to his heart and began to weep.

This brought about a change in Madhai. He also fell at the feet of Mahaprabhu and said, "Prabhu! Have mercy on me too. If you do not show mercy on a fallen soul like me, who will?"

Mahaprabhu said, "Your deliverance is not possible, because you have hurt Nityanand. Nityanand's body is superior to mine."

"Is there any means by which I can be delivered?" asked Madhai with his throat choked and tears flowing from his eyes.

Mahaprabhu's heart melted on account of the request Nityanand had made to Him regarding the two brothers and his merciful attitude towards them. He said, "Your deliverance is possible only if Nityanand forgives you. There is no other way. You go and fall at the feet of Nityanand."

Madhai fell at Nityanand's feet. Nityanand said, "Prabhu! If you hesitate to show mercy on Madhai because of his sins, I give him the effect of all the good deeds I have performed in this life and the lives that have passed. Now be merciful to him. He is also yours."³⁵

³⁴ Lotus.

³⁵ C.Bh., 2, 13, 218-220.

Mahaprabhu said, "Sripad! If you have thus forgiven him, why not clasp him in Your arms?"

Nityanand embraced Madhai. Then Mahaprabhu said to Jagai-Madhai, "I am now responsible for all the sins that you have committed in this and your past lives. If you do not commit any more sins, I shall Myself reside in your bodies, which would be like My temples to Me."³⁶

Jagai-Madhai both fell unconscious on account of excessive joy. Mahaprabhu said to his devotees, "Lift and carry them to My home. We shall do *kirtan* with them."

The devotees took them to the courtyard of Mahaprabhu's house, where they regained outward consciousness. They sang Stuti in praise of Mahaprabhu, which the devotees were all surprised to hear. They were also surprised to see Sattvik-*bhavs* like horripilation, tears and tremor appear on their bodies. Mahaprabhu lifted them and said, "Both of you are now my devotees. I have taken all your sins. You can see this with your own eyes. See." As He said this His body became black.³⁷

He said to His devotees, "Tell Me how I look." Advaitcarya said, "Prabhu, You look like Gokulachandra."³⁸ In this way Mahaprabhu made the

³⁶ C. Bh., 13, 227-229.

³⁷ C. Bh., 2, 13, 298-299.

³⁸ The moon of Gokul, that is, Sri Krishna.

devotees see His Krishna form. But he said to them, "The black colour you see in my body is due to the sins of Jagai-Madhai, which I have taken. Now you perform *kirtan*. The sins will then disappear and mix with the bodies of those who slander or talk ill of others."

Mahaprabhu then performed dance and *kirtan* with the devotees in the form and *bhav* of Krishna. Jagai-Madhai also danced with Him. Blessed Jagai-Madhai! Who can describe how blessed they were? They danced with Krishna, their bodies touching the body of Krishna, the body, which even Laksmi could not touch, howsoever much she aspired! And who can describe the mercy of Nitai-Gaur, Who gave Krishna-*prem* in return for sins and beating! Ram, Krishna and the other incarnations gave Mukti³⁹ to many by killing. But who gave Krishna-*prem* in return for beating? The other incarnations gave to Their devotees the boon they prayed for in return for the service they rendered to Them. But who gave Krishna-*prem* in return for the mountains of sins without the sinners even asking or praying for it?

Sri Vrindavan Das Thakur has written that on seeing this Lila of the deliverance of Jagai-Madhai even the gods were surprised. They glorified the Mercy of Mahaprabhu and began to dance with joy. Yamaraj⁴⁰ began to doubt whether the two brothers had ever

³⁹ Freedom from bondage of Maya.

⁴⁰ The Regent of Death, the god of departed spirits.

committed a sin. He called Chitragupta⁴¹ and asked him to read from the record of their deeds. Chitragupta said, "Prabhu! How can I read the record of sins committed by them. Even if one lac people are engaged to read that record and they read it continuously for a month, they will not be able to read the whole record. They did not let a second pass without committing a sin. The messengers came to report their sins, and the record-keepers tried to note them, but they could not keep pace with the reports that continued incessantly to pour in. In exasperation they started scolding the messengers themselves. Often I have wondered and wept to think how and for how long they would suffer the torments to be meted out to them in different kinds of hell for all the sins committed by them. But Mahaprabhu has in a trice destroyed all their sins and given them *Krishna-prem*, which even Brahma cannot easily attain. Now what shall we do with the bundle of sins committed by them. It must be consigned to the sea."⁴²

Yamaraj became unconscious to hear this. On regaining consciousness he began to glorify the mercy of Mahaprabhu and dance with joy with both arms raised. Other gods also began to dance.

Jagai-Madhai were blessed with the mercy of Nityanand and Mahaprabhu. They in fact, became the

⁴¹ The Secretary of Yamaraja, who keeps a record of the vices and virtues of people.

⁴² C.Bh., 2, 14, 10-19.

symbol of the utmost limit of Their mercy. Still the fire of penitence was incessantly burning in the heart of Madhai. One day on the bank of Ganga he fell at the feet of Nityanand and said with tears streaming out of his eyes, "Prabhu! When I think that it is You Who sustains the universe in the form of Vishnu, it is by Your Shakti that Brahma creates, and Rudra destroys the universe, and it is You, Whose body I struck, the fire of penitence begins to smoulder in my heart and there is no peace for me. I feel that You have not forgiven me. Prabhu! Forgive, otherwise the fire of penitence will consume me. There is nothing that can quench this fire except Your mercy. So have mercy Prabhu, have mercy."

Merciful Nityanand lifted and clasped him close to His heart and said, "Madhai! You are like my own child, my son. If the child strikes at his father, does he feel hurt? You rest assured that you have not committed any offence against Me."

Madhai felt assured. But he said, "Prabhu! You have forgiven me. But I have committed most hideous offences against countless people, whom I do not recognise. Kindly let me know how I can expiate them."

Nityanand said, "Madhai! You do one thing. Thousands of people come every day to bathe in the Ganga. You make a bathing-ghat for them. You live all the time on the bank of Ganga and take the dust of their feet and their blessings."

Madhai obeyed. He started digging earth from the bed of the Ganga and piling it upon the bank. In a short time he prepared the *ghat*. He started living on the *ghat*. Everyday he bathed in the Ganga, counted two lac Hari-nam on the beads and rendered whatever service he could to the devotees, who came to bathe. He fell at their feet and said to them with tears flowing from his eyes, "Kindly forgive me for the offences I have committed against you knowingly or unknowingly." Even today the Madhai Ghat in Navadvip reminds us of the story of the deliverance of Madhai and the causeless and limitless mercy of Gaur-Nitai.

With the deliverance of Jagai and Madhai Nityanand's desire was fulfilled and the personality of Mahaprabhu became manifest. People came to know of his supernatural power to bestow Krishna-*prem* and his influence over people increased a thousand-fold.

CHAPTER XV

MAHAPRABHU'S DANCE AS LAKSHAMI AND OTHER EPISODES¹

One day Mahaprabhu said to the devotees, "We shall have a dramatic performance of Krishna-lila today, in which I shall dance as Lakshmi." Advaitcharya asked, "Who will be the hero?" Mahaprabhu replied, "The Shrivigraha of Gopinath, Who sits on the altar."² He assigned different parts to the other devotees and asked Buddhimant Khan to arrange for the dress, ornaments and other materials required for the drama. It was decided that the drama would be staged in the house of Chandrashekhar Acharya, the maternal uncle of Mahaprabhu. But Mahaprabhu warned that only those should be allowed to enter the house of Chandrashekhar to witness his dance as Lakshmi, who had complete control over their senses. This scared the devotees. Advait was the first to say, "I will not go to the house of Chandrashekhar today, because I

¹ This episode is also mentioned in Murari Gupta's *Kadacha*, 2, 15, 16 and Kavikarnapur's *Mahakavya*, Sarg. 11.

² C. Bh., 2, 12, 18.

cannot claim to have complete control over my senses.”³ Srivas said the same.³

Mahaprabhu said, “If you do not go, for whom shall I dance?” The next moment he said, “Very well. Don’t worry. By my grace you will all have the Shakti of Mahayogeshvar and on seeing my dance no impure thoughts will come to your mind.”⁴

Everyone was happy to hear this. But Advaitcharya said, “Prabhu! Tell me what part I shall play in the drama. You have not assigned any part to me.” Mahaprabhu said with a smile, “You will be free to play any part you like.” Not being able to understand what he meant, Advait looked at him frowningly. But the next moment he thought that he was required to play the part of a clown and he was happy.⁵

At night the stage was ready at the house of Chandrashekhar. The party was also ready for performance. The Vaishnavs and their families arrived to witness the drama. Shachi also arrived with her daughter-in-law to witness the dance of her son.

The performance started with *Sankirtan* in which Mukund sang the song—‘*Ram Krishna bol hari gopala govinda*’—The first to come at the stage was Haridas, the Kotaval, with a long mustache. He arrived with a big turban over his head and a stick in hand, saying

³ *ibid*, 22 - 23.

⁴ *ibid*, 24 - 26.

⁵ *ibid*, 33 - 36.

to the people, "Be quiet and attentive. Mahaprabhu is going to dance as Lakshmi. In the meantime you meditate on Krishna and chant Krishna-nam."

Everyone laughed to see Haridas. Some one said, "Who are you? What brings you here?" Haridas replied, "I am the Kotaval of Vaikunth, always in the service of Krishna. I come, because Krishna has come here to distribute *prem*. He will dance in the guise and *bhav* of Lakshmi. I shall watch and see that everything is in order and there is no disturbance. That is my duty as Kotaval." So saying he looked at the audience gravely and twisted his long mustache.⁶

Next came Srivas as Narad, with a long white beard, singing Hari-nam and playing Vina.⁷ He was followed by Rami Pandit with a Kamandalu in hand and *asan* under his arm-pit. He spread the *asan*. Narad sat on it. Advait, who had been coming and going on the stage, dancing and gesticulating, shouted to see him, "Who are you? How do you come here?"

Srivas said, "I am Narad. I keep wandering about in infinite Brahmandas, singing the name of Krishna. I went to Vaikunth to see Krishna. I came to know that He had gone to Navadvip with His Parikaras. So I came here. I shall see Prabhu dancing as Lakshmi."⁸

At this time, Mahaprabhu was dressing and adorning himself as Lakshmi inside the house. As soon

⁶ *ibid*, 45 - 49.

⁷ A musical instrument.

⁸ *ibid*, 56 - 60.

as the adornment was complete he was charged with the *bhav* of Rukmini. In that *bhav* he began to shed tears and write with his fingers on the ground the seven Shloks of Rukmini's letter to Krishna, given in Shrimad Bhagavat, in which she said, "Beloved! From the moment I heard about You, Your beauty, fame and other qualities I am completely sold out to You. I cannot for a moment keep my mind with me. It always goes out to You. Bless me by accepting me as your wife and save me from falling into the hands of the wretched Shishupal, to whom I am to be married tomorrow. Today, according to the custom in my family, I will go out to the temple of Bhavani to worship her and ask for her blessings. At that time You may kindly come with Your army and take me away. If You do not I will starve myself to death." He was reciting the Shloks and weeping while writing; His companions were laughing to see him do so.⁹

This went on till the first part of the night was over. During this period Narad Muni sang and danced on the stage. Then appeared on the stage Gadadhar in the form of Gopi (Radha) and danced.¹⁰

⁹ *ibid*, 76 - 98.

¹⁰ Gadadhar was perhaps made to dance as Radha only to fill in the gap till Mahaprabhu had composed himself and appeared on the stage to dance as Maha-Lakshmi, which was the main purpose of the drama. Gadadhar must have been happy in the role of Radha, which was his real self, as disclosed by Mahaprabhu himself. (C.Bh., 2, 18, 115 - 116).

Gadadhar's dance was not ordinary. It was the dance of Love. It was as if *Prem-bhakti* had itself assumed a form in the shape of Gadadhar and was dancing. Tears of love incessantly flowed from his eyes, which made the audience as well as the actors weep and go into ecstasy.¹¹

Then appeared on the stage Mahaprabhu Himself in the form of His own Adya-Shakti (Primal Shakti) with Nityanand in the form of Her old Badai, (maternal grand-mother) tottering and twisting blissfully in love. Everyone shouted "Jai Mahalakshmi!" But no one recognized Mahaprabhu. For Mahaprabhu was not really acting. He had, under the pretence of acting in the drama, actually assumed the form of Mahalakshmi. Who could, therefore recognize Him. Even Shachi could not. She only wondered how Mahalakshmi had come on the stage.¹² Others thought that it was the same, Mahamaya, Who had maddened Shiva, but they had remained unaffected, because of the boon Mahaprabhu had given them.¹³ Mahalakshmi sometimes danced in the *bhav* of Rukmini, sometimes in the *bhav* of Chandra, sometimes in the *bhav* of Revati and sometimes in the *bhav* of Vraj-gopi. She danced in the *bhav* of the different manifestations of Adya-shakti.¹⁴

¹¹ *ibid*, 113 - 114.

¹² *ibid*, 131.

¹³ *ibid*, 134.

¹⁴ *ibid*, 133 - 146.

Vrindavan Das Thakur says, "The Lord performed this Lila with a specific purpose. The purpose was to impress upon everyone the necessity of not disregarding any form of His Shakti, whether Vaidika or worldly. Krishna was happy, when He was worshipped along with His *parikaras* or His partial manifestations. He was unhappy, when they were disregarded."¹⁵

Vrindavan Das does not mean that the partial manifestations of Adya-shakti should be worshipped in the same manner as Krishna or Adya-shakti; but that they should be given the respect that is due to them.

While dancing Mahalakshmi developed the *bhav* of Jagata-janami (mother of the world). She showed such motherly affection for all that everyone present was filled with Bhakti and a unique *bhav* of child-like dependence upon Her. Everyone began to weep in love. Nityanand was so much overwhelmed that he fell senseless on the ground.¹⁶

Dancing in the *bhav* of Jagata-janani, Mahalakshmi suddenly took the Shrivigraha of Gopinath in Her lap and sat on the altar.¹⁷ Everyone stood before Her with folded hands and sang Stuti to Her as he thought fit. Some glorified Her as Lakshmi, some as Chandi, some as some other Shakti. All shed

¹⁵ *ibid*, 147 - 149.

¹⁶ *ibid*, 158.

¹⁷ *ibid*, 163.

tears of love. Again and again they bowed down to Her and sang Stuti. All lost outward consciousness and passed the night in transcendental bliss. When the day dawned, they regained consciousness. There was then no end to their grief to learn that the night was over. They felt that they were suddenly pulled out from Vaikunth and began to weep.

Merciful mother then gave them the *bhav* of Her milk-sucking children. She held each one of them affectionately and made him suck the milk of Her breast.¹⁸

The Vaishnavs sucked their Mother's breast happily and were filled with *prem-bhakti*. Could the Divine Mother be more merciful than that? Could She adopt a more generous and affectionate way of feeding Her children with Bhakti?

For seven days after this the house of Chandrashekhar radiated light, which seemed to be a mixture of the light of sun, moon and electricity.¹⁹ Everyone saw the light and wondered.

SRIVAS PANDIT'S MOTHER-IN-LAW OUSTED FROM SANKIRTAN

Mahaprabhu continued to perform *Sankirtan* at the house of Srivas. The doors were always closed during *Sankirtan*. No one was allowed to enter, who did not

¹⁸ *ibid*, 202 - 203.

¹⁹ *ibid*, 226 - 227.

deserve. One day the mother-in-law of Srivas Pandit came before the *kirtan* started and hid herself in the store-room of Srivas Pandit's house. That day, when Mahaprabhu was dancing in *Sankirtan*, he said, "I do not know why I am not feeling happiness in *Sankirtan* today. Perhaps someone else is hiding here to watch our dance and *kirtan*."²⁰ Srivas looked all round and said, "Prabhu! No one else from outside is here." When again Mahaprabhu repeated the same words, Srivas searched the whole house. He found his mother-in-law hiding in the store-room. Since Srivas was in a drunken state of mind, having drunk of the cup of Krishna-*prem* in the company of Mahaprabhu, he pushed her out by holding her hair.²¹

SHUKALAMBARA BRAHMACHARI

One day Mahaprabhu showed his mercy on Shukalambar Brahmachari. Shukalambar was a poor devotee, who lived near his house. He was so poor that he had to go from house to house to beg for food.²² Mahaprabhu loved him very much, because he chanted Hari-nam day and night and wept. He was allowed entrance in *Sankirtan* at the house of Srivas. He used to dance in *Sankirtan* with the alms-bag hanging on his shoulder. The devotees laughed to see him dance.

²⁰ C. Bh., 2, 16, 7 - 9.

²¹ *ibid*, 17.

²² C. Bh., 2, 16, 112.

One day, when Mahaprabhu was sitting in Bhagavad-*bhav* and Shukalambar was dancing in *Sankirtan* in ecstasy, He called him lovingly and said, "Shukalambar! You have been My devotee life after life. I love to eat your food so much that I snatch it from you, even when you do not want to give. Don't you remember that once²³ in Dvarka I snatched a handful of rice from you and ate. I was going to snatch more, when Kamala held my hand." As He said this He took a handful of rice from his alms-bag and began to eat.²⁴ Shukalambar said, "Prabhu! What are You doing? You eat the beggar's unboiled rice begged from a number of homes!"

Prabhu said, "I love to eat your rice because you are My dear devotee. I do not even look at the nectar, served by a non-devotee."²⁵

The other devotees wondered to see this. They shouted, 'Haribol!' and danced in ecstasy.

Mahaprabhu said, "Listen Shukalambar! I always sit in your heart. When you eat, I eat with you. When you go for *bhiksa*, I go with you. I have come to distribute *prem-bhakti*. I give you *prem-bhakti*. *Prem-bhakti* is my heart and soul. There is nothing better, that I can give." The devotees again shouted 'Haribol'.

²³ In Dvapara Yuga, when Shukalambar was Sudama.

²⁴ *ibid*, 125.

²⁵ *ibid*, 127.

Vrindavan Das says, "The Vedas describe the rules and regulations for offering food to the deity, including the formation of Mudras²⁶ with hands. But *Prem-bhakti* does not recognize any rules of ritualistic worship. The Lord Himself proved this by taking out rice with His own hand from the bag of Shukalambar and eating.²⁷

Similarly on another occasion Mahaprabhu said to Shukalambar, "Shukalambar! I shall today dine at your house." Shukalambar was aghast. "Prabhu!" he said, "What do you mean? You must be jesting. I am a beggar, a sinner and a creature lowlier than an insect and you would eat at my house!"²⁸

"Not jesting Shukalambar. I keenly desire to eat food cooked by you. Go home and cook. I shall come at noon to eat." Still Shukalambar feared to cook, because he thought he was unholy and untouchable. He inquired of the devotees what he should do. They said, "Why do you fear? No one is untouchable for the Lord, specially not one, who does His *bhajan* day and night. He always craves for his food. Did He not Himself ask for food from Vidur, the son of a Shudra?"

Shukalambar cooked with great care and piousness, chanting "*Jai krishna govinda gopala banamli.*"

²⁶ A sign of ritualistic worship consisting of the intertwining of fingers.

²⁷ *ibid*, 141 - 145.

²⁸ C. Bh., 2, 26, 1 - 5.

As soon as the food was ready Prabhu arrived with some of his devotees. He began to take the cooked food out of the pots himself. Shukalambar laughed to see him do so. He offered the food to Vishnu and began to eat. As he was eating he said repeatedly, "Oh! How tasty! I never ate such food in my life before. I wonder how you cooked it."²⁹

After he had eaten the devotees took the remnants. All of them also took their mid-day rest that day at the house of Shukalambar.

MERCY ON VIJAYA AKHARIYA

Vijaya was one of Mahaprabhu's favourite students. He used to copy books for Mahaprabhu. Therefore he was called Vijaya Akhariya (Vijaya, the copyist). The day on which Mahaprabhu dined at the house of Shukalambar, he was also among the devotees, who were resting at his house after dinner. Everyone had at that time gone to sleep except Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu, wanting to bless Vijaya with his mercy, placed his hand upon his body. As soon as he did this, Vijaya had a wonderful experience. He saw His beautiful golden arm and fingers, wearing jewelled ornaments, radiating light that was equal to the light of millions of suns and moons. He saw that transcendental effulgence enveloping Brahman and everything else.³⁰

²⁹ *ibid*, 24 - 26.

³⁰ C. Bh., 2, 26, 40 - 43.

Vijaya was going to shout, when Mahaprabhu put his hand upon his mouth and said, "Do not shout. Do not disclose this secret to anyone while I am alive."³¹

Vijaya then made a loud inarticulate sound and became unconscious. The devotees thought Mahaprabhu had blessed him by giving him *darshan* in some divine form, but Mahaprabhu said he had perhaps seen one of the deities he worshipped at home.

This episode bears out one of the basic principles of the philosophy of Shri Chaitanya, according to which the formless Brahman is the external glow of the body of Bhagavan.

Vijaya was blessed with this vision, because he had served Mahaprabhu as his copyist. This underlines the importance of service as the essence of *bhajan*.

THE WONDERFUL MANGOE TREE

One day, after *Sankirtan*, Mahaprabhu was sitting, somewhat tired, in the courtyard of Srivas. The devotees also were tired and hungry. Mahaprabhu thought of a wonderful device to remove their fatigue and satisfy their hunger. Kaviraj Gosvami writes that he sowed a mango seed in the courtyard. Immediately the seed sprouted and began to grow. Within a few seconds it grew into a tree, laden with ripe mangoes. Two hundred mangoes were plucked. They had neither

³¹ *ibid*, 44 - 45.

skin nor stone and were full of ambrosial juice. One mangoe was sufficient to satisfy one's hunger. The devotees enjoyed eating them after they were offered to Vishnu. The tree bore fruits all the twelve months of the year. Therefore the devotees enjoyed eating them every day after *Sankirtan*.³²

This appears to be incredible. But nothing is impossible for the Lord. He has only to desire and His Lila-shakti Yogamaya fulfills the desire.

VISHVARUP-DARSHAN TO ADVAITACHARYA AND NITYANAND

One day in the courtyard of Srivas Advaitacharya was dancing in *Gopi-bhav*. He was so overwhelmed with *gopi-bhav* that the dance continued for six hours. With great difficulty the devotees could make him stop the dance and sit down. But he started dancing again and again.³³ At that time Mahaprabhu was in his house. He came to know of Advait's *bhav*. Immediately he came to the house of Srivas. He took Advaitacharya into the Vishnu temple and closed the door from inside. He said to him with a smile, "Acharya! Tell me what you desire."

"What is there to be desired Prabhu, except You, Who is the essence of everything, as described in the Vedas?"

³² C. C., 1, 17, 73 - 82.

³³ C. Bh., 2, 24, 32 - 38.

"I am already here before you. Tell me what else you want."

"I want to see Your *aishvarya*— the *Vishva-rup*, You once showed to Arjun on the battlefield."

Immediately Advait saw before him seated on a chariot in the battlefield of Kuruksetra the four-armed Krishna with conch, discus, club and lotus in His four hands. Then he saw in His place the infinite Brahamandas, with infinite suns, moons, mountains, rivers and oceans, infinite faces, with infinite mouths and eyes and infinite arms. He saw Arjun doing *Stuti* before Him.³⁴

Advait bowed down and prayed again and again to be blessed with His *bhakti*.

Nityanand came to know that Mahaprabhu was manifesting His Vishvarup form to Advaitcharya. He shouted and knocked at the door of the temple. Mahaprabhu took him in and again closed the door. As Nityanand saw the Vishvarup, He closed his eyes and lay prostrate to make obeisance. Mahaprabhu said, "Rise Nityanand. You are my soul. There is nothing about Me that is not already known to you. No one is dear to Me more than you." The three *prabhus* then danced together happily in the temple.³⁵

³⁴ *ibid*, 48 - 51.

³⁵ *ibid*, 58 - 64.

AT THE HOUSE OF BAMACHARI-SANNYASI

Once Mahaprabhu and Nityanand were going to Shantipur. On the way lay the house of a Sannyasi. They went to see him. The Sannyasi was pleased to see two young men, looking like two moons, gracing his house. He welcomed them. They bowed down to him. He blessed them by saying, "May you be wealthy and learned and lead a happy life with a beautiful wife and children."

Mahaprabhu said, "That is not a blessing. You should say—'May you have Krishna-*bhakti*.' It hardly becomes you to bless me with things that are perishable."³⁶

Thinking aloud the Sannyasi said laughingly, "Yes, I had heard that some people react wildly, if you do some good to them. This son of a Brahmin is like that. I blessed him with riches. Instead of being grateful to me, he finds fault." Then he said to Mahaprabhu, "Listen, you condemn my blessings. Tell me, what is the use of life, if one does not have wealth and a beautiful wife? Why should one live, if one cannot enjoy life? You do not want wealth, but Bhakti. What will you eat, if you have Bhakti, but no wealth?"

Mahaprabhu laughed and said, "Sannyasi Maharaj! People cherish wealth, wife and children as the end of life. But even after getting all of them, why do they

³⁶ C. Bh., 2, 19, 49 - 50.

die? They do not want disease, but why do they get disease? The cause is *Karma*. Wealth and wife, etc. a man gets according to his *karma*. He is happy or unhappy according to his *karma*. But the worldly happiness is not the end of life. It is true that the Vedas speak of worldly things and Svarga (heaven). They say that, if you bathe in Ganga or chant Harinam, you will get the worldly pleasures and will go to Svarga. But that is because people like these things. The Vedas want to put them on the path of Bhakti by promising what they like. The end is Bhakti, not the pleasures of this world or Svarga.”³⁷

Sannyasi looked at Nityanand and said, “Look at this boy, who is only a child before me. I have grown old and traveled all over the world, yet he knows better than me what is good or bad.”³⁸

Nityanand smiled and said, “Sannyasi Gosain! You are right. I know that you are great. This child does not know. You need not talk with him. You may excuse him for his impertinence.”³⁹

The Sannyasi was pleased to hear this. He offered them fruits to eat, which they ate after offering to Krishna. After that the Sannyasi said to Nityanand, “Shripad! Should I get some *anand*? ” Nityanand said, “No, we go.” Mahaprabhu said to Nityanand, “What is *anand*? ” Nityanand had traveled all over the country.

³⁷ C. Bh., 2, 19, 60 -67.

³⁸ *ibid*, 74 - 77.

³⁹ *ibid*, 78 - 79.

He knew that the Bamachari Sannyasis drank wine and they called it *anand*. As soon as he said to Mahaprabhu that it meant wine, Mahaprabhu stood up and rushed towards Ganga. Nityanand followed.⁴⁰

Vrindavan Das Thakur says that the two brothers went to the house of Bamachari Sannyasi, because they wanted to teach him and the world through him that the end was Bhakti, not the pleasures of this world or the next. Also because they wanted to bless him by their company, on account of which he was bound, sooner or later, to give up the *bamachari* way of life and pursue the path of Bhakti.⁴¹

NITYANAND THE ELDER BROTHER

One day Mahaprabhu was sitting in the house of Srivas with Nityanand, when Murari Gupt came. Murari first made obeisance to Mahaprabhu, then to Nityanand. Mahaprabhu said, "Murari! You do not know etiquette." Murari said, "Prabhu! How can I, when you sit in my heart? I behave as you guide."

Mahaprabhu said, "Well, well, go home today. I will tell you everything tomorrow."

At night Murari saw a dream. He saw that Nityanand was going ahead in the guise of a wrestler, with the hoods of Anant Deva over his head as umbrella and *hala* (plough) and Musal (signs of

⁴⁰ *ibid*, 87 - 94.

⁴¹ *ibid*, 96 - 98.

Balarām) in his hands. Mahāprabhu was going behind him, serving him with a fan. In the dream Mahāprabhu said to Murari, "Do you now understand? I am younger."⁴²

The next day, when Murari went to Mahāprabhu, he first made obeisance to Nityanand, then to Mahāprabhu. Mahāprabhu said, "Murari! Why this change in your behaviour?" Murari said, "Prabhu! What can I say? You make me behave as you choose. What is the strength of a dry blade of grass! It moves to and fro as the wind makes it do."

Prabhu said, "Murari! You are dear to me. Therefore I divulged this secret to you."

Mahāprabhu was chewing betel when he said this. He gave a part of the betel chewed by him to Murari. Murari ate and began to swim in the ocean of bliss.⁴³

PRAKASHANAND SARASVATI

While talking with Murari Mahāprabhu was suddenly charged with the *bhav* of Bhagavan. His mind went to Prakashanand Sarasvati and He began to say, gritting His teeth in rage, "In Kashi sits Prakashanand. The fellow teaches Vedanta. He chops off my hands and feet and cuts my body into pieces by declaring that I have no form. Because he demolishes my body, I caused leprosy in his body. Even then the fellow

⁴² C. Bh., 2, 20, 14 - 17.

⁴³ *ibid*, 28 - 29.

persists in teaching that My Shri-Vigraha is false. My Sri Vigraha includes in it the infinite Brahmandas and is worshipped by all gods and goddesses. Still this fellow has the courage to say that it is false.⁴⁴

"I tell you Murari, because you are my servant, that My Shri-vigraha is true, My servants are true and My servant's servants are true. My *dham* is true, My Lila is true, My name and form and My attributes are all true. They are glorified by Anant Deva. Shiva and Narad and the Vedas. Yet the fellow says they are false.⁴⁵ One, who does not believe in them, is doomed."⁴⁶

After thus giving vent to His rage against Prakashanand and condemning those, who denounced His Sri Vigraha, Mahaprabhu lapsed into *bhakta-bhav*. He embraced Murari lovingly and said again and again, "Murari! I cannot express how dear you are to me."

MAHAPRABHU'S INDIGESTION AND MURARI

Murari went home swimming in bliss and swinging in *bhav*, with Mahaprabhu and Nityanand sitting in his heart and making him sometimes dance, sometimes laugh. He said to his wife, "Give me food to eat." His wife served him food. Lost still in *bhav*, he began to smear each morsel of food with *ghee* and throw it on

⁴⁴ *ibid*, 32 - 38.

⁴⁵ *ibid*, 35 - 43.

⁴⁶ *ibid*,

the ground, saying, "Eat Krishna, eat." His wife laughed. She knew that he was in *bhav*. Every time he asked for more food, she gave. Every time he dropped it piece by piece on the ground, saying, "Eat Krishna, eat."⁴⁷

Next day early in the morning Mahaprabhu went to the house of Murari. Murari was at that time chanting Harinam. On seeing Mahaprabhu he said, "Prabhu! What brings you here so early in the morning?"

Prabhu said, "I come for treatment of indigestion."

"What is the cause of indigestion Prabhu? What did you eat yesterday?"

"Cause? Don't you know? How can you? Your wife knows. She knows what you gave me to eat, how much you smeared each morsel of food with *ghee* and offered it to Me, saying 'Eat Krishna, eat.' I had to eat all that you gave. How could I refuse to eat the offerings made by you, since I am completely sold out to you. It is your food that caused indigestion, your water will cure." So saying Mahaprabhu took water from the water-pot of Murari and drank.⁴⁸

Murari had forgotten about the offerings he had made, because they were made in *bhav*. He now remembered everything and became unconscious on realizing how merciful was Mahaprabhu to him.

⁴⁷ *ibid*, 56 - 57.

⁴⁸ C. Bh., 2, 20, 62 - 70.

Murari's wife and his servants also realized Mahaprabhu's mercy on them and wept, because they all had the good fortune of eating the remnants of the food eaten by Mahaprabhu and drinking the water drank by him. Vrindavan Das says, "Even the most learned pandits of Navadvip were not so blessed as were the servants and maid-servants of Murari."⁴⁹

MAHAPRABHU RIDES MURARI AS GARUDA

One day when Mahaprabhu was sitting in the house of Srivas, he assumed the form of Narayana, holding in His four hands conch, discus, club and lotus and began to shout 'Garuda! Garuda!'⁵⁰ At the same time Murari, in his house, was charged with the *bhav* of Garuda. He came running to the house of Srivas and said to Mahaprabhu, "Here I am your Garuda."⁵¹

"What? You are Garuda!" said Mahaprabhu.

"Yes, yes, I am Garuda. Do you forget that I brought for you Parijata from heaven?⁵² Do you forget

⁴⁹ *ibid*, 73.

⁵⁰ The sacred bird, which Vishnu rides.

⁵¹ C. Bh., 2, 20, 78 - 82.

⁵² Once Krishna and Satyabhauma went to heaven. There was a Parijata tree in the garden of Indra, the god of heaven. Satyabhauma took a fancy for the tree and wanted it to be carried to Dvarka and planted in her garden. Krishna began to uproot the tree. Indra and the other gods objected. A battle was fought. Krishna defeated Indra and brought the Parijata tree to Dvarka on the back of Garuda.

that I took you to Vanapur when you went there to bring Aniruddha, who was kept in captivity by the demon Vana?⁵³ Now climb my shoulders and let me know to which Brahmaṇa I should take you.”⁵⁴

Prabhu climbed the shoulders of Murari. Murari ran about in the courtyard of Srivas with the Lord on his shoulders. The devotees shouted ‘Jai Lord Vishvambhar! Jai Murari!’⁵⁵

Vrindavan Das says, “This Lila of the Lord is reported by the fortunate ones, who saw it with their eyes. Unfortunate are they, who do not believe.”⁵⁶

MURARI'S ATTEMPT TO COMMIT SUICIDE

The devotee lives and breathes in *bhav*. Different kinds of *bhav* current continue to rise and fall in his mind. One day a new current crossed Murari’s mind. He began to think, “Prabhu loves me so much. He calls me ‘brother’. Even a moment without him appears to me like an age. What will happen, if he passes away before me? I should do something to avoid the suffering of separation.” Immediately he decided what he should do. He got a knife and concealed it somewhere in his house. He decided that he would one day have Mahaprabhu’s *darshan* to his heart’s

⁵³ Vana was the thousand armed son of Raja Bali.

⁵⁴ *ibid*, 86.

⁵⁵ *ibid*, 87 - 90.

⁵⁶ *ibid*, 97.

content and take leave of him in his mind. Then he would cut his throat with the knife at night.⁵⁷ At the same time Mahaprabhu came and stood before him. He said, "Brother Murari! If I make a request to you, would you comply?"

"What do you say Prabhu? Why will I not comply?" Is not this body your own?"

"If the body is mine, what right have you to assassinate it with the knife you have brought?

Murari was taken aback. After a slight pause he said, "What knife Prabhu? Why should I get a knife and what for?"

"Do not lie Murari. I know when you got the knife made, where you have concealed it and why." As Mahaprabhu said this, he went inside his house and brought the knife. Then he said with throat choked with emotion, "Murari! What offense have I committed, on account of which you want to forsake me? How can I live without you?"⁵⁸

What could Murari say? He cast his head down and began to weep. Prabhu pulled him in his lap and said caressing him on his head, "Murari! Who gave you this advice? Because you cannot bear my separation, you want to make me suffer your separation. Such is your love for me! With this Prabhu began to weep. Murari also burst into tears. Prabhu

⁵⁷ *ibid*, 110 - 116.

⁵⁸ *ibid*, 124 - 126.

held Murari's right hand, put it on his head and said, "Swear that you would not leave me and go."⁵⁹

Murari fell on his feet and said with choked throat, "Prabhu! How can I leave you? The thought of your leaving me had made me mad. Kindly forgive."

Murari's life is a proof that the relationship between Bhakta and Bhagavan is eternal. Neither the Bhakta can leave Bhagavan, nor can Bhagavan leave the Bhakta.

MAHAPRABHU TESTS MURARI'S FAITH IN RAMA

Once Mahaprabhu said to Murari, "Murari! There is no difference between Ram and Krishna. But Krishna-lila is more relishable. You do the *bhajan* of Krishna and relish the mysterious *rasa* of Vraj." The whole night that day Murari tried to do the *bhajan* of Krishna. The next day he went to Mahaprabhu and said, "Prabhu! I tried very much to do Krishna-*bhajan*, but could not. I am completely sold out to Ram and find it impossible to do the *bhajan* of Krishna. You can punish me for not obeying you."

Mahaprabhu was pleased. He said, "Murari! You are Hanumana. If you leave Ram, who else is there whom He may call His own. You have all along done the *bhajan* of Ram. As a reward for your *bhajan*, I

⁵⁹ *ibid*, 127 - 128.

give you the boon that Vraj-lila also will be manifest to you."

MERCY ON DEVANAND

Once, during his ramblings in Navadvip with his companions, Mahaprabhu happened to go near the house of Devanand Pandit. Devanand was a learned Brahmin and a *jnani*, who was totally indifferent to the world. He was desirous of Mukti, which he considered superior to Bhakti. But he taught *Shrimad Bhagavat* to students and was famous for his knowledge of *Bhagavat* and his discourses on it.

When Mahaprabhu reached his house, he was reminded how on an earlier occasion he had allowed his students to turn out Srivas from his class, because on hearing Krishna-lila, he had begun to weep in *bhav*, which neither he nor his students could understand. On remembering the same, he was filled with rage. He said to Devanand, "O Devanand! You teach *Bhagavat*, but you do not know anything about *Bhagavat*, *Bhakti* and *Krishna-rasa*. This is evident from your behaviour towards Srivas, who came to hear your discourse on *Bhagavat* that day. Even Ganga craves the *darshan* of Srivas because of his *bhakti*. But you allowed your students to turn him out of your class, because he wept in *bhav* to hear *Shrimad Bhagavat*. What offence did he commit, on account of which you turned him out? His only fault was that he wept, because his heart was filled with *Krishna-rasa*.

You cannot enjoy Krishna-rasa even though you teach *Bhagavat*, because you are devoid of Bhakti. A man like you, who is devoid of Bhakti, is not qualified to teach *Bhagavat*, which is full of Bhakti-rasa from beginning to end.”⁶⁰

Devanand cast down his head with shame. But he did not say anything. He had great respect for Mahaprabhu, but he had not yet recognized his divinity. Therefore Mahaprabhu’s chastisement did not immediately bring about much change in him.

Some time later Vakreshvar Pandit happened to come and stay with him for some time. Vakreshvar was one of the dearest companions of Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu loved to see his dance. When he danced all the *Sattvik-bhavs* together appeared on his body. It is said that it was not he, but Krishna who danced in him, because He always sat in his heart.⁶¹

Devanand was very much impressed by him. He served him well. In his dance, when he was so overwhelmed with *bhav* that he lost control over his body and fell on the ground, he took him in his lap. He removed the dust of his body and applied it to his own. On account of his company and the service he rendered to him, his heart was purified and he developed faith in Shri Chaitanya as Bhagavan.⁶²

⁶⁰ C. Bh., 2, 21, 68 - 74.

⁶¹ C. Bh., 3, 3, 471 - 473, 95.

⁶² *ibid*, 417 - 418.

Therefore once, after his Sannyas, when Mahaprabhu went to Kuliya, Devanand went to him for his *darshan*. Not having the courage to go near him, he made obeisance from a distance and sat down. Mahaprabhu was happy to see him. He took him aside and said, "Devanand! It is on account of the service you rendered to Vakreshvar that you have got this opportunity of seeing me. Vakreshvar is the Shakti of Krishna. Whoever serves him with Bhakti, attains Krishna."⁶³

Devanand stood before him with folded hands and said, "Prabhu! While You were in Navadvip, You showered Your mercy upon so many people and delivered them from Maya. I remained unblessed, because I could not recognize You. But Your incarnation is for the deliverance of every one, whether he is worthy or unworthy. Therefore kindly bless me too with Your Bhakti. Kindly let me know how I can attain Your Bhakti. Also kindly let me know how I should teach Shrimad Bhagavat, so that You may be pleased."⁶⁴

Mahaprabhu said, "Listen. From beginning to end *Bhagavat* teaches Bhakti. You should, therefore, explain *Bhagavat* only in terms of Bhakti. Bhakti alone is eternally true. Even in *pralaya* (universal dissolution), when everything is destroyed, Bhakti remains alive and resplendent as ever. *Bhagavat* was never compiled by

⁶³ *ibid*, 493 - 494.

⁶⁴ *ibid*, 497 - 503.

anyone. It is eternal like *Bhagavan* Himself and it appears and disappears like the Avatars of Bhagavan. *Bhagavat* is not different from Krishna. It is the body of Krishna. It appeared on the tongue of sage Vyasa by the mercy of Krishna. Vyasa compiled the Vedas and the Puranas, still his mind was not at peace. He was happy only when he described *Bhagavat*, as it revealed itself to him. All the Shastras describe Bhakti, but none describes it as it is described in *Bhagavat*. Therefore you go and teach *Bhagavat* as the embodiment of Bhakti.”⁶⁵

VAISHNAV-APARADH AND SHACHI

One day again, as on the Mahaprakash day, Mahaprabhu sat on the altar of Vishnu in the house of Srivas in *Bhagavad-bhav* with the Shaligrama Shilas in His lap and distributed *Krishna-prem*. Srivas said to Him, “Prabhu! Also bless Shachi Ma with *Krishna-prem*.”⁶⁶

Mahaprabhu said, “Do not say that Srivas. I cannot give Bhakti to her, because she has committed *Vaishnav-aparadh* (offence against Vaishnavs).”⁶⁷

“What do You say Prabhu? You will not give *Prem-bhakti* to Your own mother, from whose womb You are born! If You don’t that will mean death to us

⁶⁵ C. Bh., 3, 3, 505 - 523.

⁶⁶ C. Bh., 3, 3, 505 - 523.

⁶⁷ *ibid*, 25 - 26.

all, because she is the mother of us all. If she has committed an offense against any Vaishnav, You must condone it and bless her with Bhakti."

"I can preach against Vaishnav-aparadh, but I cannot condone it. Vaishnav-aparadh can be destroyed only if the Vaishnav, against whom it is committed forgives. You know that I could not condone the offense Durvasa committed against Ambarish. Durvasa had to approach Ambarish himself for its condonement. Ma has committed an offense against Advait. I can give her Bhakti, if he forgives her and she takes the dust of his feet and applies it to her forehead."⁶⁸

The Vaishnavs then went to Advaitcharya and told him everything. Advaitcharya was stunned. He said, "What do you mean? Do you want to take my life? Shachi Ma is the mother of my Lord and therefore my mother and the mother of everyone else. I crave the dust of her feet and you want me to give her the dust of my feet and forgive her for I know not what! How do you have the courage to say that? Don't you know Ma is Ganga. She is Devaki-Yashoda!" As he said this, he was overwhelmed with *bhav* and fell unconscious.⁶⁹

At that opportune moment Shachi came and took the dust of his feet and applied it to her forehead.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ *ibid*, 32 - 36.

⁶⁹ C. Bh., 2, 22, 38 - 44.

⁷⁰ *ibid*, 45.

As she did that, she fell senseless on the ground. Such was the effect of the dust of the feet of the Acharya. The Vaishnavs shouted 'Haribol!' to see them both fall unconscious on account of the divine influence of the personality of each on the other.

After this Mahaprabhu said to Shachi, "You have no more *aparadh* against *Advait*, I gave you *Bhakti*."

But what *aparadh* had Shachi committed? Her *aparadh* was this. She had always felt that her son Vishvarup took Sannyas, because he had come under the influence of Advaitcharya, in whose company he always lived and whom he revered as Guru. But she never said anything against him. When Vishvambhar also started keeping his company and staying away from home for long hours, she felt that he would take her second son also from her. Therefore one day she said in agony, "Advaitcharya is *advaita* (without duality) for the world, but *dvaita* (duality) for me." Her *aparadh* was that by calling him *dvaita*, she blamed him for trying to take away her second son also from her.⁷¹

Vrindavan Das says that this was not really an *aparadh*. Mahaprabhu took it as *aparadh*, because he wanted to impress upon everyone, through his mother, the fact that *Vaishnav-aparadh* was a serious thing and no one, howsoever big, could escape its consequence,

⁷¹ *ibid*, 59 - 116.

which was the displeasure of Krishna and the denial of Bhakti.⁷²

MAHAPRABHU'S MERCY ON A PIOUS BRAHMACHARI

Sankirtan at the house of Srivas was going on without break. Mahaprabhu danced in *Sankirtan* every night. A pious Brahmachari, who lived in Navadvip was anxious to see Mahaprabhu's dance. But no one was allowed entrance in the house of Srivas at night, except the devotees. Srivas knew the Brahmachari well and admired him, because he led a saintly life and lived only on milk and fruits. He requested Srivas constantly to let him in so that he might be blessed by seeing the dance of Mahaprabhu. Srivas could not oblige him for fear of Mahaprabhu. One day, however, he took him in and kept him in hiding in a corner, from where he could see the dance.

Sankirtan began with the song—

*Krishna Ram Mukund Murari-Banamli*⁷³

Nityanand, Gadadhar, Srivas and others sang while Mahaprabhu danced. As usual tears, tremor, horripilation and the other *Sattvik-bhavs* adorned his body. Still he did not feel thrilled and inspired as usual. He said, "I do not fully enjoy the *bhav* of Prem-*bhakti*

⁷² *ibid*, 58 , 119.

⁷³ C. Bh., 2, 23, 29.

in *Sankirtan* today. It appears that some one from outside has come in and is watching my dance. Tell me at once, if that is so?"⁷⁴

Srivas was filled with fear. He said, "Prabhu! No unworthy person, but a Brahmachari Brahmin, who leads a pious life and lives on milk and fruits is here. I let him in, because he wanted to be blessed by seeing your dance."

Mahaprabhu was red with rage. He said, "Turn him out at once. How does he deserve to see my dance? Does living on milk mean Bhakti? What have I to do with a Brahmin or Brahmachari, who is not surrendered to me. Even a *chandala*⁷⁵ is dear to me, if he is surrendered to me. He is mine and I am his."⁷⁶

The Brahmachari was scared. He quietly sneaked out and began to think, "I committed an offense and got appropriate punishment. But it was my great good luck that I could see the soul-stirring dance and the wonderful *Sankirtan*, even though for a short while."

Omniscient Mahaprabhu was pleased to know that he took the punishment as one of His devoted servants would and He called him back. Placing His foot upon his head, He said, "Brahmachari! You must know that I am not pleased by austerity and forced Vairagya. I am pleased only by Bhakti."⁷⁷

⁷⁴ *ibid*, 35 - 36.

⁷⁵ Person of the lowest chaste.

⁷⁶ *ibid*, 40 - 43.

⁷⁷ *ibid*, 40 - 43.

On getting the mercy of Mahaprabhu the Brahmachari began to weep. The devotees joyfully shouted 'Haribol!'.

THE DEATH OF THE SON OF SRIVAS AND MAHAPRABHU

One day *Sankirtan* was going on in the courtyard of the house of Srivas. Mahaprabhu was dancing. He was totally absorbed in the dance and had no outward consciousness. Inside the house the son of Srivas died. The ladies began to cry. Srivas heard the cry. He went in and saw that his son was lying dead. He said to the ladies, "Stop weeping. Is this an occasion for mourning? You know that if a man dies while listening to the name of the Lord, he goes directly to His *dham*. But this boy died while the Lord Himself was dancing here and singing His own name. I would consider myself fortunate if I die like this. This is not death but deliverance, not an occasion for mourning, but for rejoicing. If you must weep, weep after some time. If you weep and cry now and cause disturbance in Prabhu's entrancement, I shall immediately go and drown myself in the Ganga."⁷⁸

The ladies stopped mourning. Srivas came and joined *Sankirtan* joyfully and with greater enthusiasm. Mahaprabhu remained absorbed in dance. The devotees came to know about the demise of the son of Srivas.

⁷⁸ C. Bh., 2, 25, 29 - 36.

But no one said anything to Mahaprabhu, even when he stopped dancing and sat down to rest for a while. But Mahaprabhu said, "I do not know why I feel unhappy today. Perhaps some misfortune has befallen Srivas."

Srivas said, "Prabhu! What misfortune can befall, when you are here, the very image of all good fortune and happiness?"⁷⁹

The devotees, however, told him that his son had died.

"When did that happen?" said Prabhu concernedly.

"In the early hours of night," replied the devotees. They added, "Srivas did not tell anyone about this for fear of causing disturbance in your enjoyment. It is now six hours since the death took place. If you order, we may prepare for the funeral."

Prabhu said, "Govind! Govind! How can I renounce such company? How can I renounce my devotees, who do not even mourn the death of their son for the sake of my happiness?!" With this Mahaprabhu drew a deep breath and began to weep.⁸⁰

The devotees were very much concerned to hear that Mahaprabhu was thinking of renouncing them. They whispered to each other that he was perhaps thinking of Sannyas and wept.⁸¹

⁷⁹ *ibid*, 44 - 45.

⁸⁰ *ibid*, 50 - 53.

⁸¹ *ibid*, 53 - 55.

When the devotees saw that Mahaprabhu was assuaged, they began to take out the dead body of the child for funeral. As Mahaprabhu saw him going, he said to him, "Child! Why are you going away from the house of Srivas?"

The dead child replied, "Prabhu! This is according to Your own design. Who can do anything against Your will?" Everyone was surprised to hear the dead child talking with Mahaprabhu. The child said further, "I lived in this body as long as it was determined that I should live in it. That period is over and I am going to another place, where I am now determined to go and live. Kindly bless me so that I may never forget You. Prabhu! Who is whose father? Who is whose son? Everyone reaps the fruit of his *karma*. Now I am going elsewhere. I make obeisance at Your feet and the feet of Your companions before I leave. Kindly do not take offense at my leaving." After this the child became silent and his body lay lifeless.⁸²

On hearing what he said Srivas and the devotees were happy beyond measure. They fell at the feet of Mahaprabhu and began to weep.

Mahaprabhu said to Srivas, "Srivas! You know how the world is full of suffering. But you have nothing to worry about its sorrows and sufferings. They cannot touch you. Not only you, even those who live in Your company are insulated from all kinds of

⁸² *ibid*, 58 - 66.

suffering. Nityanand and I are your two sons, You need, therefore, have no anxiety of any kind.”⁸³

These words of Mahaprabhu filled every one with joy and hope. Everyone shouted ‘Haribol!’

Mahaprabhu, himself went with the devotees to the bank of Ganga, and saw that the funeral ceremony was duly performed.

⁸³ *ibid*, 74 - 76.

CHAPTER XVI

DELIVERANCE OF THE KAJI

Mahaprabhu's divinity was no more a secret. The people of Navadvip generally regarded him as the incarnation of Shri Krishna and called him 'Mahaprabhu'. They went to him to be blessed by his *darshan* and made all kinds of presents to him.

MAHAMANTRA

Mahaprabhu advised them always to do *japa* of Mahamantra and perform Sankirtan. In the words of Vrindavan Dasa Thakur he said:

*"krishna-nam mahamantra shunaha harikhe—
hare krishna hare krishna krishna krishna hare
hare/
hare rama hare rama rama rama hare hare//
prabhu bole 'kahilaum ai mahamantra/
iha japa giya sabe kariya nirbandha//
iha haite sarva-siddhi haibe sabara/
sarva khana bola ithe vidhi nahi ara//
dasa pancha mili nije dvare te basiya/"*

*kirtan karaha sabe hate tali diya//
haraye namah krishna yadavaya namah/
gopal govind rama shri madhusudana//
sankirtan kahilam ey toma sabakare/
stri-putra bape mili kara giya ghare”//*

—Listen Krishna-nam mahamantra:

*hare krishna hare krishna krishna krishna hare
hare/ .
hare rama hare rama rama rama hare hare//*

This is *mahamantra*. Go home and do its *japa* all the time, and count while doing *japa*. There is no other rule regarding it besides counting. It will help you attain all that is to be attained. Also five or ten of you sit outside the door of your house and chant together, clapping your hands. When you chant thus in group, chant the following:

*haraye namah krishna yadavaye namah/
gopal govind rama shri madhusudana//*

This is *sankirtan*. Husband and wife, father and son do it together.” (Ch. Bh., 2, 23, 75 - 81)

Did Mahaprabhu mean that only the song *haraye namah krishna yadavaye namah* etc should be sung in Sankirtan? Obviously not, for he himself sang several

other songs in Sankirtan.¹ Mahaprabhu laid absolute stress upon counting in *japa*. *Haribhakti-vilasa* says “*asamkhyatamcha yajjapurn tam sarvam nishphalam bhaveta*—*japa* without counting does not bear fruit.”² The reason why Mahaprabhu did not recommend the chanting of Mahamantra in Sankirtan probably was that it was not possible to count it in Sankirtan.

Did Mahaprabhu specifically prohibit the chanting of Mahamantra in Sankirtan? Probably not. It is said that what has been said above relates to Vaidhi Bhakti. Raganuga Bhakti is above the rules and regulations of

¹ Chaitanya Bhagavata and Chaitanya Charitamrita record besides *haraye namah* etc. only the following songs sung by him and his devotees in Sankirtan:

^{1.} *tuya charane mana lagahun re/*

sarangadhara, tuya charane mana lagahun re//

(This is described by Vrindavan Dasa as the *adi-sankirtan* or the first song sung by Mahaprabhu in Sankirtan) —C. Bh., 2, 23, 241 - 242.

hari O rama rama hari O rama rama/

—C. Bh., 2, 23, 219.

hari bola mugdha loka, hari hari bola re/

namabhase nahi raya shaman bhaya re//

—C. Bh., 2, 23, 269/

jai krishna mukund murari banamali/

—C. Bh., 2, 23, 422.

hari bola mukund gopal banamali/

—C. Bh. 2, 23, 435.

rama krishna jai dhvani govind gopal/

—C. Bh., 2, 23, 419

² *Haribhakti-vilasa*, 17, 60.

Vaidhi Bhakti. The above teachings were given to the common people, who were not qualified for Reganuga Bhakti.

Mahaprabhu's instructions soon bore fruit. Sankirtan began to be performed in every nook and corner of Navadvip. The sound of *khola-karatala* and the shouts of 'Haribol' echoed all over. Mahaprabhu was happy to see this. Occasionally he went to the people, performing Sankirtan, embraced them, gave them his own garland and said, "Brethren! Remember Krishna always and chant His name. He is very kind."³ Mahaprabhu's loving and merciful attitude towards the people and his passionate desire for their deliverance through Sankirtan gave further fillip to the Sankirtan movement in Navadvip. Navadvip became Vaikunth.

On seeing that a strong wave of Vaishnavism was sweeping rapidly across Navadvip and the Vaishnavs were becoming stronger and stronger their enemies were scared. They went to the Kaji and sought his protection saying, "Nimai has started a new religion of singing and dancing, which is against the Shastras. His religion is spreading fast. It threatens to destroy Hinduism. It may pose a threat to administration as well, if it is not stopped at once." For some reason or the other the Kaji did not pay heed.

³ ibid, 86 - 87.

THE KAJI FORBIDS SANKIRTAN

Later the Muslims of Navadvip went to the Kaji and complained against *kirtan*.⁴ The Kaji assured them that he would do everything to crush the movement. In the evening he went to a house, where the Vaishnavs were performing Sankirtan. He broke their *mridanga* and said, "So long you did not practise 'Hinduani' (Hinduism). Who has now emboldened you to do so? You must know that no one is allowed to do *kirtan* in Navadvip. I warn you today. But if I find anyone doing *kirtan* again, I shall give him severe punishment and destroy his caste."⁵

The enemies of the Vaishnav, amongst the Hindus were jubilant at the chastisement of the Vaishnavs. They began to say, "These fellows did not heed our advice. We asked them to chant the Name slowly. The Vedas do not say that they should shout and disturb everyone's sleep. They have got the right punishment for going against the Shastras. But they are stubborn. They are not afraid even of losing their caste. Nimai is too self-conceited. He has an exaggerated idea, of his importance. Now the Kaji will crush him and his followers. Nityanand , who goes about freely dancing and chanting and asking people to chant, like one intoxicated, will also come to his senses."⁶

⁴ C. C., 1, 17, 118.

⁵ ibid, 119 - 122.

⁶ C. Bh., 2, 23, 110 - 113.

The Vaishnavs were frightened. They went and reported everything to Mahaprabhu. They said, "We cannot do *kirtan*, because we fear the Kaji. He goes round the city everyday with an army of a thousand soldiers. We cannot also give up *kirtan*. If you permit, we shall go and live at some other place, where we can freely do *kirtan*."⁷

Mahaprabhu roared aloud with anger and ordered, "Go and perform *kirtan* without fear. I shall today do *kirtan* in the whole of Navadvip. I shall see which Kaji or king prevents. Today there will be torrential rain of *prem-bhakti* for all. For our enemies it will be *kal* (death). I shall do *kirtan* at the door of Kaji and burn his house and all. Go and announce this everywhere."⁸ ⁹ He also asked them to decorate the city in order to celebrate the occasion.¹⁰

The people decorated the city with bunting. In front of every house were placed trunks of banana trees, pitchers full of water covered with mango leaves and cocoanut and *deotis* (lamps with stand) to be lighted at dusk. Men, women and children all began to rejoice at the thought that they would for the first time see Mahaprabhu singing and dancing on the streets of Navadvip.¹¹ It is said that Navadvip of that

⁷ ibid, 116 - 117.

⁸ C. Bh., 2, 23, 118 - 126.

¹⁰ C. C., 1, 11, 27 - 28.

¹¹ C. Bh., 2, 23, 158 - 159.

time was bigger than the present Calcutta. It was not known what route Mahaprabhu's procession would take. Therefore the whole city was decorated and made to put on a festive look.

In the afternoon assembled near the house of Mahaprabhu, besides Nityanand and Advaitcharya, Shrivasa, Gadadhar, Vakreshvar, Murari, Gopinath, Jagadish Mishra, Gangadas, Ramai, Govindnand, Chandrashekhar, Vasudev, Shrigarbh, Mukund, Shridhar, Govind, Jagadanand, Nandn Acharya, Shuklambar and countless other devotees of Mahaprabhu.¹²

Inside the house Gadadhar was decorating Mahaprabhu with flowers. He combed his hair, collected it and tied it over the crown of his head in the form of a beautiful *chura* intertwined with flowers. He adorned the rest of his body with ornaments of flowers and sandal paste and made him wear *nupurs* (tinkling anklets) round his ankles. But was not Mahaprabhu going to subdue Chand Kaji, the grandson of Sultan Husain Shah, who had behind him the strength of his powerful army? It did not appear that he was serious about it. If he were, he would have adequately equipped himself and his followers with arms. He was instead decorating himself as a dancer and had asked his followers to come, not with weapons, but with *khols* and *karatals*, the instruments for Sankirtan.

¹² C. Bh., 2, 23, 149 - 152.

But no, Mahaprabhu was serious. He did not need any weapons to conquer the Kaji. Does the great Lord, Who creates and destroys the universe by His mere will, need any weapons to conquer a Kaji, who is like an insect before Him? Conquest of the Kaji was for Him a trifle, a game, which He could easily accomplish, dancing and singing. Besides He always carried with Him a powerful weapon—the weapon of *prem*, which, unlike all the other weapons, struck not on body, but on soul and instead of killing converted the foe into friend.

Conquest of the Kaji was also not the real purpose of the Nagar-sankirtan. That was only a pretence. The real purpose was the deliverance of the people of Navadvip by leaving upon their minds a permanent impression of Himself as the Lord of Love, dancing in love, chanting His own Name and asking them to chant. Thus the people would forget the Lord as the Governor of the Universe, Who smiled at saints but frowned at sinners. They would remember Him as the One, Who was so merciful and loving that He came down from Vaikunth at their doors to teach the saints as well as the sinner, how to dance and chant His Name, so that they might be delivered and embraced by Him as His own in love for ever and ever. He was decorating Himself and trying to make His naturally beautiful figure more beautiful so that they might see Him and be compelled to love Him.

The violent attitude he had expressed by threatening to burn the house of Kaji was to inspire

courage in their hearts, so that they might participate in Sankirtan. It strengthened their faith in Him as the great Lord Himself, Who had the power to protect them from the Kaji and his army, and they became fearless. By the time it was dusk they came in millions to His house with Mashals¹³ in their hands, shouting, "Haribol" and "Mahaprabhu-Ki-Jai!"

Mahaprabhu was pleased to hear the 'Haribol' sound of millions of people. He also roared aloud 'Haribol'. Mahaprabhu's sound filled the hearts of people with joy. They lighted their Mashals. The ladies lighted the lamps in front of their homes. Navadvip was aglow with the light of millions of Mashals and millions of lamps. Mahaprabhu came out. He welcomed the crowd by shouting 'Haribol' with arms raised and a bewitching smile on His face. The people felt enchanted to see the lustrous beauty of his face and his golden body, adorned with flowers, and shouted 'Haribol'.

THE GRAND SANKIRTAN PROCESSION

Mahaprabhu ordered the Sankirtan procession to start. The procession was led by a group headed by Advaitcharya. Advaitcharya danced, and sang while the others in the group sang round him. The second to follow was the group of Haridas Thakur, who danced and sang while the others sang round him. The third

¹³ A staff with one end rapped in cloth, dipped in oil and lighted.

was the group of Shrivas, in which Shrivas sang and danced, while the others sang round him. In this way there were a number of other groups. Each group was led by some one, who danced. Others sang and danced round him. Last of all was the group, in which Mahaprabhu himself danced, with Nityanand and Gadadhar on his either side to hold and prevent him from falling, when he was overwhelmed with *bhav*.¹⁴ Mahaprabhu sang the song:

“*tuya charane mana lagahun re/
sarangadhara, tuya charane mana lagahun re//*
(C.Bh., 2,23,241)

—O Flute-player! In Thy lotus feet may my mind repose.”

Vrindavan Dasa describes this as the Adi Sankirtan of Shri Chaitanya.¹⁵ Mahaprabhu danced, while Murari, Mukund, Rami, Govind, Vakreshvar, Vasudev and others sang and danced round him.¹⁶

In other groups the following *kirtan* songs were sung:

1. *hari O rama rama hari O rama rama/*
(C. Bh., 2, 23, 11)
2. *haraye namah krishna yadavaya namah/
gopal govind rama, shri madhusudana//*
(C. Bh., 2, 23, 222)

¹⁴ C. Bh., 2, 23, 203 - 207, 210 - 211.

¹⁵ ibid, 241 - 242.

¹⁶ ibid, 209 - 210.

3. *hari bol mugdha loka hari bola re/
namabhase nahi raya shamana bhaya re//*
(C. Bh., 2, 23, 269)
4. *jai krishna mukund murari banamali/*
(C. Bh., 2, 23, 422)
5. *hari bol mukund gopal banamali/*
(C. Bh., 2, 23, 435)
6. *rama krishna jai dhvani govind gopal/*
(C. Bh., 2, 23, 419)

Vrindavan Dasa Thakur does not find words to describe the beauty of Mahaprabhu, the Lord of Vaikunth, dancing on the streets of Nadiya. He only says, "It was like millions of Cupids.¹⁶ Even the gods could not resist the temptation of coming down to see him. But as soon as they saw, they became unconscious. On regaining consciousness they assumed the form of ordinary men and began to sing and dance in Sankirtan."¹⁷

The people seemed to be in frenzy. They sang and danced in ecstasy. They shouted 'Haribol' at the top of their voice. They played *khol* and *karatal* most vigourously. The sound of a thousand *khols* and *karatals* seemed to rend the sky. They raised slogans against the Kaji and threatened to tear him into pieces.¹⁸ They threatened to kill all those, who were hostile to Sankirtan. Their number went on increasing as the

¹⁶ ibid, 174.

¹⁷ ibid, 246 - 247.

¹⁸ ibid, 232.

procession moved on, till the enormous procession began to look like a tempestuous sea of humanity flowing on and on to deluge and destroy the enemy completely and for ever. Vrindavan Dasa says that even though there was no limit to the number of people, who joined Sankirtan, it was possible for everyone, to see Mahaprabhu, on account of his mercy.¹⁹

Mahaprabhu went dancing, completely oblivious of himself, lost in the bliss of Sankirtan and the *rasa* of the holy Name. As he went different waves of *bhav* played in his heart. Sometimes, possessed by Bhagavad-bhav, he sat on the ground in Virasan, with his left hand on the shoulder of Nityanand and shouted, "I am Narayana, I am the One, Who killed Kamsa, I am the One, Who killed Ravana, I am Nrishimha and Vamana!" Sometimes he wept in *bhakta-bhav* and prayed, "O Lord! I am the servant of Thy servant. Give me *bhakti*."²⁰ Sometimes he cast a loving glance at the people and by his single glance filled them with *bhakti*. Thus went the Lord of Vaikunth on the streets of Nadiya, swimming in the ocean of *bhakti-rasa* and distributing *bhakti*.

He did not have outward consciousness. He only said, "Haribol. Haribol" and shed tears. Tremor horripilation, sweating and the other Sattvik-bhavs adorned his body. Men, women and children in

¹⁹ ibid, 186 - 187.

²⁰ ibid, 287.

thousands gathered on either side of the road to see him. They also shouted 'Haribol' and shed tears. They spread flowers on every part of the road before he planted his lotus-feet on it. Even some of the enemies of the Vaishnavs, who criticized him and Sankirtan, wept to see him and shouted 'Haribol'. Some, however, said, "Let the Kaji hear this tumultuous uproar of 'Haribol.' He will then come and we shall see these fellows running away for life."²¹ The Sankirtan procession was still at some distance from the house of the Kaji, when he heard the sky-rending sound of thousands of *mridangas* and *karatals* and the shouts of 'Haribol' made by millions of throats. He called his men and said, "Go and see what this noise is about, whether it is some one's marriage or the *kirtan* of ghosts. Who is this, doing *kirtan* against my order? Let me know at once."²²

As soon as the Kaji's servants went out, they were frightened to see the millions of people shouting together, "Kill the Kaji." They came back, filled with panic, and said, "What are you doing? Flee, flee. Nimai is coming with millions and millions of Mashals. God knows what he will do. He comes dancing and the people have beautifully decorated the city to welcome him. They have strewn flowers all over his path. No one does this even to welcome a king. He roars aloud and the people start shouting, 'Kill the Kaji, kill the

²¹ ibid, 341.

²² ibid, 360 - 361.

Kaji,'. We tremble to see the ghost that is Nimai and fear that he comes to devour us all.”²³

The Kaji said, “May be Nimai Pandit is going to marry. But if he is doing Hinduani,²⁴ I shall destroy his caste and the caste of all his followers.”²⁵

But as soon as the Sankirtan procession came near and he heard the roar of millions of people shouting, “Kill Kaji!”, he began to fly with his men, as fly the frogs and mice to see the snake. They could not fly, because every inch of space all round was occupied by the tumultuous crowd shouting the Kaji’s death.²⁶ The Kaji’s men tried to conceal their identity by mixing with the crowd. They threw their turbans and entered the crowd shouting ‘Haribol’ and dancing with both of their hands raised. Those who had beards bent low to hide their beards.²⁷

When Mahaprabhu came to the Kaji’s house, he roared with rage, “Where is the stupid Kaji? Pull him out and sever his head. I shall today wipe out the *yavanas* (Muslims) from the face of earth, as I did before by killing Kala Yavana²⁸. Go and pull him out. Demolish his house.”²⁹

²³ ibid, 364 - 375.

²⁴ Practice of Hindu religion by performing Sankirtan.

²⁵ ibid, 376 - 377.

²⁶ ibid, 379 - 382.

²⁷ ibid, 383 - 384.

²⁸ The story is given in Bhagavata, 10, 50 - 51.

²⁹ ibid, 387 - 390.

The people entered the compound of the Kaji's house and demolished everything they could lay their hands on. The banana trees were pulled down. The mangoe trees were made branchless and leafless. The flower plants were all uprooted. The out-houses also were destroyed. Not a trace remained of anything in the compound.³⁰

After the destruction of the out-houses and the garden, Mahaprabhu ordered, "Set fire to the Kaji's house so that he and his men inside are all reduced to ashes. What can the King and his army do? Even Yama, the Regent of death is the servant of my servants. The purpose of My incarnation is to preach Sankirtan. I shall today destroy all Yavanas and those, who obstruct Sankirtan. Go and set fire at once to the Kaji's house. Do not fear any one."³¹

It is only some imperious and hot-tempered people, who did demolition. The sober among the devotees tried to contain Mahaprabhu's anger. They knelt before Him in supplication and said, "Prabhu! It is not Your nature to be angry. The Vedas describe You as calm and blissful. To be angry is the function of Rudra, who is but a part of Your partial manifestation Sankarshana. He has the capacity to destroy the entire universe by his anger. It ill behoves You to be angry over a trifle. Kindly contain Your

³⁰ ibid, 392 - 397.

³¹ ibid, 398 - 405.

anger. The Kaji has been sufficiently dishonoured. You may punish him further if he misbehaves again.”³²

Mahaprabhu’s anger³³ subsided. He sat down and asked some of his companions to go inside the house of the Kaji and bring him out. The Kaji came after he was assured that Mahaprabhu had calmed down. He bowed down to Mahaprabhu and Mahaprabhu made him sit by his side. He said to him with a smile, “I came to you as your guest. But you hid yourself from me. What kind of etiquette is this?”³⁴

The Kaji replied, “You came in anger. I remained in hiding to allow the anger to subside. Now when you have calmed down, I have come. It is my great good fortune that I have a guest like you. According to our village relationship Nilambhara Chakravarti is my uncle. He is your maternal grandfather. Therefore I am your maternal uncle and you are my nephew. Village relationship is stronger than blood relationship.

³² ibid, 406 - 414.

³³ It should be noted that Mahaprabhu’s anger was not generated by Rajoguna, which is the manifestation of Maya. Maya cannot even touch Him. It was His mercy that manifested itself in the form of anger. It is true that the Kaji could have been converted by His mere will or *darshan*. But He also wanted to warn everyone through the Kaji of the dire consequences of obstructing *kirtan* or in any way harrassing the devotees, performing *kirtan*.

³⁴ C. C., 1, 17, 139.

Maternal uncle does not take it seriously, if the nephew is angry. The nephew also does not mind, if the uncle commits an offense.”³⁵

Mahaprabhu’s *darshan* and his behaviour towards the Kaji brought about a change in him. A rapport was established between them. Therefore they began to talk freely. Mahaprabhu said, “Uncle! I came to ask you a question.”

“What is it? Let me know,” said the Kaji.

Mahaprabhu said, “The cow gives you milk. She is your mother. The ox cultivates the field and gives you grain. He is your father. You kill your father and mother to eat them. What kind of religion is this?”

The Kaji said, “Just as your Shastras are the Vedas, our Shastra is Kuran. Kuran lays down two different paths—the path of *pravritti* or attachment, and the path of *nivritti* or detachment. In *nivritti* killing of all kinds of animal is prohibited, in *pravritti* the killing of cows is permitted. Therefore we do not commit any sin by killing the cow. The Vedas also permit the killing of cows. Therefore your Rishis also killed them.”

Mahaprabhu said, “Our Vedas prohibit the killing of cows, but permit killing, if after killing we can bring them back to life. The Rishis killed old cows and revived them by the power of Mantras. The cows got new life and became young. Thus instead of doing

³⁵ C. C., 1, 17, 140 - 144.

any harm to them by killing, they did good to them. In Kaliyuga the Hindus do not have the power to revive, therefore they do not kill the cows. You do not have the power to revive, still you kill. Therefore you are bound to go to the worst kind of hell.”³⁶

The Kaji was stunned. He cast his head down in shame.

Mahaprabhu said, “Uncle! I shall ask you one more question. Give me the correct answer without concealing anything from me. You see that in your city Sankirtan is going on. People are dancing and singing and creating so much noise. You as Kaji are invested with the authority to suppress Sankirtan. But you do not now do so. Would you tell me why?”

The Kaji said, “Listen Gaur Sundar! I address you as ‘Gaur Sundar’, since everyone calls you ‘Gaur Sundar’. That day, when I entered the house of a Hindu, stopped Sankirtan and broke *mirdang*, I saw a dream at night. In the dream appeared a lion with human body and face like lion, roaring ferociously. He jumped over my body, and said in a fearful voice, showing his teeth and scratching my chest with his nails, “You stopped my *kirtan* and broke *mirdang*. In return I shall take out your heart and kill you.” I closed my eyes with fear and began to weep. The lion then took pity on me and said, “You did not harass my devotees much, therefore I do not kill you.” The Kaji

³⁶ C. C., 1, 17, 146 - 163.

then opened his chest and showed the scratches made by the lion with His nails. Everyone was surprised to see them.³⁷

The Kaji said, "The next day a sepoy came to me and said, 'When today I was going about in the city disallowing Sankirtan, suddenly a ball of fire came from I know not where and struck my face. My beard and face got burnt.' Another sepoy also came and reported the same. I told them, 'Do not prevent Sankirtan any more. Go and sit at home.'"³⁸

"Sankirtan began to be performed freely all over the city. Then some of the Mohamadans came to report, 'Hindu religion is gaining strength. Everywhere in Navadvip we hear 'Hari Hari' and nothing else.' Others came and said, 'The Hindus shout 'Hari, Hari' all the time. If the Badashah hears, he will take you to task.' I saw that those who came to report were themselves chanting 'Hari Krishna.' I said to them, 'The Hindus chant the name of their God. That is natural. But you are Mohamadans. Why do you chant 'Hari Krishna?'" They replied, 'Our tongue repeats Hari-nam inspite of us. We do not know what Mantras the Hindus know, which make us helpless.' I sent them home. Some hypo-critical Hindus also came to me. They said, 'Nimai has destroyed the Hindu religion by introducing Sankirtan. We do not know what he eats or drinks, on

³⁷ C. C., 1, 17, 165 - 181.

³⁸ ibid, 183 - 187.

account of which he always remains intoxicated and dances and sings, laughs and weeps and rolls on the ground in ecstasy. He is mad and he has made everyone in Navadvip mad after Sankirtan. They dance and sing aloud night after night with the accompaniment of *khol* and *karatal*. We cannot sleep. According to our Shastras the name of the Lord is a Mantra, which should not be chanted aloud. If it is chanted aloud, it loses its power. Nimai was good, but after his return from Gaya he was spoiled. He has himself become God and makes the people call him 'Gaur Hari.' On account of the sins committed by him the whole of Navadvip is bound to suffer. We hope you would take adequate action against him so that he is restrained.' I told them, 'I will restrain him.'³⁹

The Kaji then looked at Mahaprabhu reverentially and said, "The highest God of the Hindus is Narayana. It appears to me that You are the same Narayana."⁴⁰

Mahaprabhu laughed and said, planting his hand upon him, "You are fortunate, because you have uttered these three names—Hari, Krishna and Narayana. All your sins are now washed off and you are purified."⁴¹

This brought tears into the eyes of Kaji. He said, "This is due to Your mercy. Bless me so that I may have Bhakti in You."⁴²

³⁹ ibid, 196 - 207.

⁴⁰ ibid, 208.

⁴¹ ibid, 210 , 211.

⁴² ibid, 213.

Mahaprabhu said, "Uncle! I seek one favour from you. You should see that Sankirtan is never prohibited in Nadiya." The Kaji replied, "I swear that not only I, no one in my family will ever prohibit or obstruct Sankirtan."⁴³

Mahaprabhu said, 'Hari bol!' and got up. He started for home, singing and dancing with his companions. On the way lay the dilapidated house of Shridhar. He entered the house and began to dance in the courtyard. On the door he saw an iron pot full of water. He lifted the pot and drank the water. On seeing Mahaprabhu drink that dirty water, Shridhar shouted, "Oh! I am doomed, I am doomed!" and fell senseless. Mahaprabhu said, "I am now purified. Shridhar's water has given me Krishna-bhakti." As he said this tears trickled down his eyes.⁴⁴ Nityanand, Advait, Gadadhar, Shrivas and others also wept to see how the Lord loved his servant.

Vrindavan Dasa says, "Let no one minimise the importance of the servant of the Lord. The Lord does not eat the choicest things duly offered by a person, who is not His servant. But He eats forcibly whatever the servant has."⁴⁵ The servant has the power to make Him assume whatever form he meditates upon and even to sell Him away if he wants.⁴⁶ Even the Muktas,

⁴³ C. C., 1, 17, 214 - 215.

⁴⁴ ibid, 440 - 445.

⁴⁵ C. Bh., 2, 23, 461 - 46.

⁴⁶ ibid, 405.

who realize formless Brahma,⁴⁷ assume a form to worship Him as His servant.⁴⁸ The servant of the Lord is like the Lord Himself. The Lord always suffers defeat at his hand.”⁴⁹

After coming out of the house of Shridhar, Mahaprabhu went to his house, singing and dancing with his companions in every part of Navadvip.

Since that day Sankirtan in Navadvip began to be performed freely. Neither the Kaji, nor any one else in his family ever tried to obstruct it. The fortunate Kaji’s Samadhi still exists and the Vaishnavs offer flowers to it with Bhakti.

⁴⁷ ibid, 72.

⁴⁸ ibid, 472.

⁴⁹ ibid, 474.

CHAPTER XVII

SANNYAS

MAHAPRABHU'S GOPI-BHAV

Mahaprabhu exhibited different kinds of *bhav* at different moments. But his dominant *bhav* was *gopi-bhav* or *radha-bhav*. Other *bhavs* were temporary. They appeared and disappeared. But *Radha-bhav* persisted.¹

Rupa Gosvami says that the path of love is zigzag by nature. It takes an adverse turn sometimes even without any reason.² When this happens, love is converted into anger, like into dislike and speech into silence. This is called *Man*. Radha sometimes developed *durjaya-man* or *Man*, which it was impossible to mollify. In this state she liked neither to look at Krishna, nor to talk with Him. She could not even utter or hear His name. She always loved Her gopi-companions (*Sakhis*). In this state all Her love for Krishna was diverted to them. Instead of chanting 'Krishna, Krishna', She chanted '*gopi, gopi*'.

One day Mahaprabhu was, in a similar *bhav*. He

¹ C. Bh., 2, 26, 82 - 83.

² *Ujjualanilamani, sringarabheda*, 42.

was chanting ‘*Gopi, gopi*.’ At that time a student happened to come. He could not understand the *bhav* of Mahaprabhu. He said, “Nimai Pandit! Why are you chanting ‘*Gopi, Gopi*?’ Chant ‘Krishna, Krishna.’ What will you attain by chanting ‘*Gopi, Gopi*?’ The Shastras say that it is the name of Krishna that bears fruit, not the name of Gopi.”³

Mahaprabhu was at that time not conscious of himself as Nimai Pandit. He was conscious of himself as Radha in the state of *durjaya man*. Perhaps he thought that the student was an agent of Krishna, who had come to persuade him to give up *man*. He said, “What is the use of chanting the name of Krishna, Who is full of faults and vices.” And he started narrating His faults.⁴ The student protested. Mahaprabhu was filled with rage. He stood up in a violent mood with a staff in hand. The student ran out of fear. Mahaprabhu ran after him.⁵

The devotees held Mahaprabhu and somehow pacified him. The student went running and reported everything to his friends. They laughed to hear what he said. But some of them, who were inimical to the Vaishnavs, burned with rage. They said, “This son of Jagannath Mishra was our class-mate. The Vaishnavs have extolled him to the skies. They call him ‘Mahaprabhu’. But he is not even a Vaishnav. What

³ ibid, 89 - 90.

⁴ ibid, 91 - 93.

⁵ ibid, 94 - 96.

sort of Vaishnav is he, if he cannot chant the name of Krishna? He was always proud and insolent. Now he has become violent. He threatens to beat us with a staff! We are not going to tolerate this. If he thinks he is powerful, we are not less powerful than him. We shall teach him a good lesson.”⁶ They always talked ill of him and told everyone that he was not a Vaishnav, but a hypocrite, who only pretended to be a Vaishnav. He had started chasing Brahmins to beat them. He was not afraid of the sin he would commit by beating a Brahmin. Next time he tries to do so, we shall beat him.⁷ They started conspiring against him.

DECISION TO TAKE SANNYAS

Omniscient Mahaprabhu came to know everything. He felt very much pained and concerned about his enemies. He said to himself, “Some of the teachers of Navadvip, who always bore a grudge against me and their pupils have all combined against me. They talk ill of me and think of beating me. They are bound to perish on account of the offense they thus commit against me. I came to deliver them. But I find that I have become the cause of their ruin. I started Sankirtan for the deliverance of all. But these people, instead of doing *kirtan*, criticize it. Besides there are some religious people, who think that their religion and their

⁶ ibid, 110 - 117.

⁷ C. C., 1, 17, 247 - 251.

way of worship is the best. They also commit offense by criticizing Sankirtan and talking ill of me. They will also perish. I cannot ignore them. I must do something to save them all from ruin and to set them on the path of Bhakti. They do not listen to me now, partly because they are jealous of me. If I take Sannyas and give up the pleasures of life, they will cease to be jealous. They will also think that I am not a hypocrite, but a genuine Vaishnav. Knowing me to be a Vaishnav Sannyasi, they would submit to me. When they submit to me, the offenses they have committed against me, will be washed off. They will then listen to me and perform Sankirtan. Sankirtan will remove all impurities from their heart and the deck will be cleared for Bhakti. I must, therefore, take Sannyas.”⁸

After Mahaprabhu had decided to take Sannyas, Keshava Bharati, a Sannyasi of Sankara Sampradaya, who had his AshRam in Kantaka Nagara (Katoya), a village in district Vardhaman, happened to come to Navadvip. Mahaprabhu invited him for dinner. He served him with great *shraddha-bhakti*. After he had eaten, he requested him to give him Sannyas. Keshava Bharati had by the grace of Mahaprabhu realized His divinity. Therefore he replied, “You are no other than the Lord Himself, Who sits in my heart. I shall be obliged to do whatever you want. I am not free to do anything else.”⁹

⁸ C. C., 1, 17, 252 - 260.

⁹ C. C., 1, 17, 261 - 264.

One day, when Mahaprabhu was sitting in a thoughtful mood, surrounded by his companions, he suddenly uttered, "The remedy has proved to be worse than the disease" and laughed and laughed aloud. No one could understand the meaning of what he said, except Nityanand.¹⁰

Nityanand felt as if he had been suddenly struck by a thunderbolt. He understood that Mahaprabhu would take Sannyas, shave his head and beg from door to door. He could not restrain his *bhav*. Streams of tears began to flow from his eyes. Mahaprabhu took him aside and said, "Shripad! Listen, I open my heart to you. I feel pained to realize that though I came for the people's deliverance, I am causing their destruction. I had thought that on seeing me the people's bond of Maya would loosen and drop, but I find that they are becoming stronger. Formerly the bonds were made of only one or two strands. Now the strands have multiplied on account of their talking ill of me and conspiring to beat me."¹¹

"I shall now give up Shikha¹² and Sutra¹³ and become a Sannyasi. As Sannyasi I shall go begging from door to door. I shall go to the doors of the very people, who want to beat me, and beg. Then instead of beating me they will bow down and surrender to

¹⁰ C. Bh., 2, 26, 121 - 123.

¹¹ ibid, 126 - 130.

¹² A tuft of hair on the crown of the head.

¹³ Sacred thread.

me. For no one beats a Sannyasi. Every one respects him.¹⁴

"I have spoken my mind to you . Now you advise what I should do. Your advice is order to me. I shall do as you order. But I hope you will keep in view the purpose of My incarnation and will not prevent Me from taking Sannyas, if you want the *jivas* of this world to be delivered from bondage."¹⁵

Nityanand was stunned. His heart broke. He did not know what to say, because he knew that Mahaprabhu would do what he chose and willed. He said, "Prabhu! You are self-willed. You would do what You like. Who can tell You what You should or should not do? Who knows better than You what You should do? You know best how the *jivas* can be delivered and you would do the same. Still you may kindly consult Your devotees. Hear what they have to say. After that you do what you choose."

Mahaprabhu felt satisfied. He embraced Nityanand heartily, then went to seek the advice of the other Vaishnavs. Nityanand remained sitting motionless and breathless as if life had gone out of him. The thought that worried him most was the fate of Shachi. She fell into a swoon even to think of Nimai's Sannyas. How would she live, if he took Sannyas and left home? He thought and wept.

¹⁴ ibid, 2, 26, 132 - 137.

¹⁵ ibid, 138 - 140.

¹⁶ ibid, 144 - 150.

Mahaprabhu went to Mukund. He asked him to sing a Krishna song, which he did. Then he said, "Mukund! Listen, I have decided to take Sannyas. I have come to inform you of the same."

Mukund was taken aback. He couldn't say anything. But his tears conveyed what he would have said. After sometime he said prayerfully, "Prabhu! If you must take Sannyas, you may. But I would urge that you may kindly stay with us for some time more and let us enjoy Sankirtan in your company."¹⁷

Mahaprabhu then went to Gadadhar and told him about his decision to take Sannyas. Nothing could have rent Gadadhar's heart more than the thought of Mahaprabhu's separation. He said with tears streaming out of his eyes and throat choked with emotion, "Prabhu! I feel surprised and very much hurt at heart to hear about your decision to take Sannyas. Do you think that it is not possible to attain Krishna without renouncing Shikha and Sutra? Is it not possible for a householder to be a Bhakta? You may think so, but this is not what the Shastras hold. Have you ever thought what will happen to your mother, if you go away from her? She will not live and you would be responsible for killing her. Inspite of that if you want to go and if you think that Sannyas alone can deliver what you want, you may do what you like."¹⁸

¹⁷ ibid, 163 - 165.

¹⁸ ibid, 170 - 177.

In this way Mahaprabhu told all his companions about his resolve to take Sannyas. All were taken aback and wept.

Mahaprabhu consoled them by saying, "You think I am forsaking you and going away from you for ever. You must not think so. I am with you and will always remain with you. In every *yuga* in My incarnation you have been My companions in Sankirtan. There will be two more incarnations, in which I shall revel in Sankirtan with you. Therefore you must not grieve." So saying Mahaprabhu gave a loving embrace to each of them. They felt somewhat assuaged.¹⁹

Murari Gupt mentions that Mahaprabhu told Shrivas, "Just as the good business men go to distant lands to earn wealth and distribute it among their friends, I will go to distant places to earn *krishna-prem* and distribute it among my companions, so that they may have the *darshan* of Krishna.²⁰ Kavikarnapura also reports the same.²¹

MAHAPRABHU'S SANNYAS AND SHACHI

When mother Shachi came to know about Nimai's decision to take Sannyas, there was no end to her grief. Again and again she fainted and fell senseless on the ground. When Mahaprabhu returned home, she said,

¹⁹ C. Bh., 2, 27, 7 - 17.

²⁰ Kadaca, 2, 18, 19 - 21.

²¹ Mahakavya, 11, 45.

weeping grievously, "Nimai, O my Nimai! Do not go anywhere my son, leaving me. You are my life, my soul and all. How can I live without you? Your good companions Advaitcharya, Nityanand, Gadadhar, Shrivas and others are here. They are all completely surrendered to you. Live here at home and enjoy Sankirtan in their company. You want to teach people their *dharma*.²² What *dharma* will you teach if you renounce your mother? Is renouncing one's mother any *dharma*?²³

Shachi wept and spoke, Mahaprabhu wept and listened. He could not speak, because his throat was choked and tears incessantly streamed out of his eyes.

Shachi continued, "My son! Look how your elder brother renounced and went leaving me weeping at home. Your father also went to Vaikunth, widowing me and making me weep. Now I live only by looking at you, your lotus face and ambrosial eyes. If you also go away, leaving me alone, how shall I live? I shall die. My home is dark. It shines only by the light of your golden face. If you go away, the darkness will thicken, and I shall die. Therefore, I say, my son, do not go. Remain at home and enjoy Sankirtan as much as you like."²⁴

Thus Shachi wept and poured out her heart.

²² Duty as enjoined by religion.

²³ ibid, 21 - 28.

²⁴ ibid, 32 - 36.

Mahaprabhu only listened with head cast down and dropping tears from his eyes.

Shachi wept day and night. She neither ate nor drank. Her body, which was already lean, was reduced to a skeleton. One day Mahaprabhu took her aside in seclusion and said, "Ma! You need not wail. Be calm and listen to what I say. You have been my mother and I your son life after life. Sometime back²⁵ you were Prishni and I was your son. Later you appeared in Svarga as Aditi.²⁶ I was at that time your son Vamana. Then you appeared as Devahuti and I became your son Kapil. Again you appeared as Devaki and I appeared as your son, when you were in prison, imprisoned by Kamsa. You are the same Devaki and I the same Devaki's son. I have told this secret to you. Therefore you should not grieve."²⁷

Shachi was somewhat assuaged. She was further assuaged when Mahaprabhu said, "Ma! Though I shall be away, you will be able to see me whenever you want."²⁸

MAHAPRABHU'S SANNYAS AND VISHNUPRIYA

Neither Vrindavan Das nor Krishna Das Kaviraj mention Vishnupriya in connection with the Sannyas

²⁵ In Svayamblin Manavantara, (Bh., 10, 3, 32).

²⁶ Bh., 10, 3 , 42.

²⁷ C. Bh., 2, 27, 39 - 50.

²⁸ C. Bh., 2, 11, 220.

of Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu told each one of his companions about his resolve to take Sannyas sometime before to prepare them for the ordeal of separation by speaking kind words to them. It is not possible that he heartlessly ignored only Vishnupriya. It is also not possible that Vishnupriya remained unaware of his resolve even when his companions and the whole of Navadvip had come to know about it or that even when she came to know of it she remained a passive observer and never herself broached the subject with him. The question of Vrindavan Das and Krishna Das Kaviraj not having any knowledge of the way in which Mahaprabhu dealt with Vishnupriya in this connection also does not arise, because Lochana Das had already written about it in his *Chaitanya Mangal*. It is not known from where Lochana Das drew his information. It is likely that he got it from mother Shachi or one of the Sakhis of Vishnupriya or even from Narayani, Vrindavan Das's own mother, who is said to have served Vishnupriya as one of her younger Sakhis. The only reason why Vrindavan Das and Krishna Das Kaviraj chose not to describe the subject seems to be that they found it too heart-rending to warrant description. The reason is the same on account of which they did not describe the disappearance of Mahaprabhu.

Be it as it may, we do not think it proper to leave out this important topic altogether from a treatise designed to be a complete biography of Mahaprabhu. We shall, therefore, base our description of the topic

mainly on the report given by Lochana Das. Lochana Das gives a soul-stirring account of the divine couple together deciding to make the highest sacrifice for the deliverance of the suffering humanity, which would make any one weep.

Someone whispered into the ears of Vishnupriya that Mahaprabhu was going to take Sannyas. As soon as she came to know about it, she became senseless. At that time Mahaprabhu was not at home. That day he returned home late at night, took *prasad* and slept. Vishnupriya went to his room. She clasped his feet with both of her arms and began to weep.²⁹ Mahaprabhu got up. He said, wiping her tears with his garment, "Vishnupriya! Why do you weep?" Vishnupriya could not speak. She wept more bitterly and continued to weep. On repeated enquiries by Mahaprabhu she collected herself somewhat and sobbed her heart out. She said, "I have heard that...."

"What have you heard darling?"

"I have heard that you are also going to do what Dada Vishvarup did."

"Who told you that? Can I do anything without telling you and without your consent?"³⁰

Vishnupriya kept quiet. Mahaprabhu said, "You seem to be lost in thought. What are you thinking about?"

²⁹ C. M., 2, 12, 3 - 4.

³⁰ C.M., 21.

"I am thinking how happy I am, happier than even Lakshmi, the wife of Narayana. But is this happiness or a dream, which is going to end?"

"You seem to have gone mad. Why imagine anything, which has not yet happened and worry about it?"

Vishnupriya said, holding Mahaprabhu's right hand and keeping it upon her head, "Swear by me and tell me truly what you have in your mind. Are you really going to thrust a knife into my heart and Ma's by renouncing us?"³¹

Mahaprabhu became grave. He said, "Darling! Listen, you want my happiness and your happiness. Our happiness lies in *Krishna-Bhajan*."

Vishnupriya said after thinking a while, "Very well. We shall both do *Bhajan*. I shall do *Bhajan* at my father's house. You do *Bhajan* here in this house. But you do not leave mother and go elsewhere."

Vishnupriya began to look anxiously at Mahaprabhu's face for his answer, but he kept quiet. Then she said, "Well, this does not suit you and you think that I will remain an obstacle in your *Bhajan*, wherever I live. Therefore I take poison and die.³² But you do not leave home. If you do, you will be cruel to yourself as well as to your mother. Will you be able to suffer the trials and tribulations of Sannyas?

³¹ ibid, 224 - 25.

³² ibid, 18.

You will sometimes get food to eat, sometimes not. You will walk bare-footed in the forests. Your lotus feet shall be pricked by thorns and bruised by stones. You will some times be overwhelmed with *bhav* and fall senseless on the ground. There will be no one to attend upon you. Even after my death, I will be unhappy to see you suffer like this. You may plague me as much as you like while I am alive. Do not plague me after my death."

Mahaprabhu said, "You are saying this, because you are emotionally disturbed. You will not die, because you know that your death will be death for me and for Ma. By living you will serve Ma and serve me by relieving my anxiety about her."

Vishnupriya said, "Have you spoken to Ma about your intention to take Sannyas and leave her alone to weep the rest of her life?"

"She has already given her consent. You also give me your consent."

"What?! Has she given her consent?"

"Yes, she has given her consent."

"No, this is not possible. You must have hypnotized her, tricked in some way or cheated her. But you cannot cheat me. I cannot give you my consent to do *Bhajan*, causing suffering to Ma and yourself. You can do what you like without my consent."

As Vishnupriya said this, she became senseless. On regaining consciousness she began to wail and say to herself, "Vishnupriya! You were the happiest and

the most fortunate woman on earth. You are now going to be most unfortunate. Who will now call you ‘darling’? Whom will you serve day and night? For whom will you cook? For whom will you adorn yourself? Whose feet would you clasp close to your heart to comfort your heart?”

Mahaprabhu said, “Vishnupriya! Do not let Maya cloud your vision. Have some discrimination. This world and its relationships are false. Only Prabhu is true and the relationship with Him.³³ Do His *Bhajan*, live for Him, cook for Him, serve Him day and night and apply His lotus-feet to your heart to find comfort and peace. Your name is Vishnupriya. Your real husband is Vishnu. Be true to your name and surrender yourself completely to Him.³⁴

So saying Mahaprabhu appeared before her in His four armed Vishnu form.³⁵ Vishnupriya bowed down to Vishnu and said, “Thakur! I bow down to You a hundred times. But You are not my husband. You are *jagat-pati* (the husband of everyone in the world). Kindly give me the boon that my devotion to my husband may remain firm and disappear.”

The four-armed Vishnu form disappeared. Mahaprabhu returned to his own form and said, “Vishnupriya! Your love has defeated my Aishvarya. For my sake you turned away Narayana! How can I

³³ C. M., 27 - 28.

³⁴ ibid, 33.

³⁵ ibid, 2, 12, 33 - 34.

leave you and go away from home? My only anxiety is that if I don't, the purpose of my incarnation will remain unfulfilled. I will not be able to deliver the fallen souls from bondage by giving *prem-bhakti* to all and sundry." As he said this tears trickled down his eyes.

Vishnupriya looked at him. A new realization suddenly dawned upon her. A new *bhav* current shook her frame. She shuddered to think that she was responsible for the tears in the eyes of the Lord. She shuddered to think that she was proving a stumbling block in the way of his mission to deliver the fallen souls. Her eyes were also filled with tears. She fell at the feet of Mahaprabhu and said, "Prabhu! I cannot tolerate the tears in your eyes. I also cannot be a stumbling block in the way of your mission to deliver the fallen souls. I give you my consent to take Sannyas. I know that I shall weep all my life in separation from you. But I shall have the satisfaction that I did my little bit towards the fulfillment of your mission."

Mahaprabhu lifted her, wiped her tears and said in a voice choked with emotion, "Vishnupriya! I am proud of you. You have chosen to suffer my separation and weep in order to save the suffering humanity from weeping life after life by giving me your consent for my Sannyas.

"Prabhu! I do give you my consent. But a shiver goes through my spine when I think that you will go away from me for ever and that I will never see your

lotus face again. It also gives me a shiver to think how the pangs of your separation will make Ma weep all her life."

"Vishnupriya! I tell you that in this incarnation we have all to weep. You have to weep, I have to weep, Ma has to weep and my good companions, who cannot live for a moment without me, have all to weep. Our tears would make the people weep. Their tears will clean their hearts and they would do *Krishna-Bhajan*. "I also tell you that our separation will only be in body, not in soul. The outward union of body with body is not real union. This is an illusion. The real union is the union of soul with soul in the service of the Lord. Besides, I tell you that when the pain of separation will increase, you will see me standing before you.³⁶ You will then realize how sweet is the union in separation."

RENUNCIATION

One day Mahaprabhu was sitting alone with Nityanand. He said to him, "Shripada! Listen, I shall leave home today and go to take Sannyas from Keshav Bharati, who lives in Katoya. You inform five persons—my mother, Chandrashekhar, Gadadhar, Brahmanand and Mukund. Do not tell anyone else. Nityanand informed them.³⁷

That day Prabhu went to the Vaishnavs and passed

³⁶ ibid, 38.

³⁷ C. Bh.,

a long time in Sankirtan with them. He returned late for the mid-day meal. After taking meal he went to the Ganga, sat there for a while and came back. The devotees started coming. Though no one knew that Mahaprabhu was going away from home that day to take Sannyas, many more people came that day than usual on account of the attraction caused by some unknown Shakti. Each brought garland of flowers and sandal paste to offer. He happily accepted their offerings and in return gave his own *prasadi* garland to them. Many were coming and many going. Mahaprabhu said to them, "Go home and chant the name of Krishna. Whether waking or sleeping, eating or doing anything else chant 'Krishna' and meditate on Krishna." They heard the ambrosial precepts of Mahaprabhu and shouted 'Haribol'.³⁸

At night came Shridhar with a pumpkin. Mahaprabhu was excited to see the devotee's offering of love. He could not remain without eating the pumpkin. But when could he eat? He was going away the next morning and it was too late at night at that time to cook. Still the temptation to eat Shridhar's offering could not be resisted. He called Ma and asked her to cook. Immediately after another devotee came with milk. Ma prepared pudding from milk and pumpkin, which was Mahaprabhu's favourite food. He rejoiced eating the same.³⁹

³⁸ C. Bh., 2, 28, 18 - 32.

³⁹ ibid, 33. - 41.

Mahaprabhu slept late that night. Gadadhar and Haridas slept near him. He got up an hour before dawn. Gadadhar knew that he would leave home at that time and go to Katoya for taking Sannyas. He expressed his desire to go with him. But he did not permit. Ma also knew that the cursed hour of her dear Nimai's renunciation was near. So she did not sleep that night. Early in the morning she went out and sat at the door of her house, weeping all the time with her head cast down.⁴⁰

When Mahaprabhu came out, he saw her weeping. He held her hand and began to say in a voice choked with emotion, "Ma! You brought me up with utmost care and affection. Every moment you tried to make me happy without caring for your happiness. I am so much indebted to you. Life after life I shall remain your debtor. Still I should have, instead of going away from you, remained at home and served you as much as I could. But Ma! Listen, We are all controlled by Krishna. No one has the power to do anything against His will. Union and separation depend on Him. I am going away, because He has so willed. But you need not worry. Wherever I remain, I shall always look after you and hold myself responsible for your material as well as spiritual well-being."⁴¹

Shachi listened, but did not say a word. She

⁴⁰ C. Bh., 2, 28, 47 - 49.

⁴¹ ibid, 51 - 58.

became still like Mother Earth and continued to weep. Mahaprabhu took the dust of her feet, circumambulated her and left.⁴²

The next day, as usual, the devotees came in the morning to make obeisance to Mahaprabhu. They were surprised to see Ma sitting at the door and weeping. Shrivas said, "Ma! Why are you sitting here? What makes you weep?" She did not reply and continued to weep. After some time she said in a voice choked with emotion and with tears still streaming out of her eyes, "Listen! You are all Vaishnavs. Everything that belongs to Vishnu, as of right, belongs to you. You take away every thing from this house. For Nimai has gone and I shall also become *yogini* and go where Vishnu will take me."⁴³

The Vaishnavs were shocked to know that Mahaprabhu had gone away from home and renounced the world. Some of them fainted, some wept and wailed. Like wild fire the news of renunciation quickly spread all over Navadvip. People rushed to the house of Mahaprabhu. They were grieved to see Shachi and the Vaishnavs weeping and wailing. They also began to weep. They said to each other, "What is the use of remaining at home, when our Lord has gone away. Let us also set fire to our homes, renounce everything and go." Even the enemies of Vaishnavs began to feel

⁴² ibid, 60 - 65.

⁴³ ibid, 69 - 72.

penitent for not recognizing Mahaprabhu while he was at home and began to weep. An atmosphere of weeping and wailing prevailed all over Navadvip.⁴⁴

SANNYAS DIKSA

Mahaprabhu crossed the Ganga and reached Katoya (Kantak-nagar). Shortly his companions—Nityanand, Gadadhar, Brahmanand, Chandrashekhar and Mukund, the only persons, who were informed about the day of his Sannyas *diksa*, also arrived there. With them Mahaprabhu went to Keshav Bharati. He made obeisance to him and said with folded hands, "Maharaj! Krishna always sits in your heart. You can give Him to anyone you like. Be merciful to me. Make me a servant of Krishna. I do not want anything else." As he said this he was overwhelmed with *bhav*. He roared aloud and began to dance with tears of love streaming out of his eyes. Mukund and his other companions began to sing.⁴⁵

Thousands of people collected on the scene. They gazed at the beauty of the golden figure of Mahaprabhu dancing in *bhav* and shedding tears. They were stupefied to see fountains of tears shooting out of his eyes and drenching the people all round.⁴⁶ Men, women and children, who were drenched with his tears, were filled with love and shouted 'Haribol'. Everyone was

⁴⁴ ibid, 69 - 72.

⁴⁵ ibid, 107 - 112.

⁴⁶ ibid, 113 - 115.

surprised to see tremor, horripilation and the other *Sattvik-bhavs* appear on his body. The ladies said to one another, "His love is as unparalleled as his beauty. Blessed is the mother, who gave birth to him. Our heart goes out to her in sympathy on her losing a son like him. We wonder if she is alive still."⁴⁷

After sometime Mahaprabhu composed himself and sat down, surrounded by his companions. Keshav Bharati said to him, "The Bhakti, I see in You, is possible only in the Lord and no one else. I am sure that You are *jagadguru*. No one can be Your guru. Still, I believe, You want to take *diksa* from me in order to teach the world that *guru-diksa* is necessary for the realization of the Lord."⁴⁸

Mahaprabhu said, "Do not thus beguile me. You have to bless me by giving Krishna-bhakti." Mahaprabhu asked Chandrashekhar to make the necessary arrangements for Diksa. When all the arrangements were made, he sat down before the barber for shaving his head. The barber shuddered to apply razor to the beautiful curly hair of Mahaprabhu, which easily stole the hearts of people. He began to weep. Nityanand and the other companions of Mahaprabhu, who were accustomed to see his beautiful hairs, beautifully bedecked with flowers, and all those, who were present, including the gods, who were watching the scene, wept. Vrindavan Das Thakur says that the

⁴⁷ ibid, 117 - 123.

⁴⁸ ibid, 126 - 129.

whole Brahamand was filled with mourning at the sight of the Lord of the Universe shaving his head for the deliverance of the suffering souls of this world.⁴⁹

While the whole Brahamand wept, Mahaprabhu himself could not contain his happiness at the thought that at last his mission to deliver the souls from bondage by imparting Bhakti, was going to be fulfilled. It filled his eyes with tears and made his body tremble and hairs stand on end. It made him stand again and again and dance, shouting '*bol, bol*' to make his companions sing. They sang, while he danced.⁵⁰ The gods wept again to see the merciful Lord weep and dance at the thought of the deliverance of the *jivas*.

But this made the task of the barber difficult. He had to stop and wait every time the Lord stood up and began to dance. With great difficulty he could complete the shaving by evening. The Lord then bathed in the Ganga and sat down at the place, where arrangements were made for *Sannyas-diksa*.⁵¹

Vrindavan Das says, "Jagadguru Mahaprabhu first cleverly made Keshav Bharati his *shishya* (disciple) by narrating to him his dream. He said, "Someone gave me a Mantra in dream. Is that Mantra the one you will give me now?" So saying he whispered the Mantra into his ear. Bharati was surprised. He said, "Yes, this is the Mantra." Then on Mahaprabhu's

⁴⁹ C. Bh., 2, 28, 140 - 146.

⁵⁰ ibid, 148 - 151.

⁵¹ ibid, 151 - 153.

request he whispered the same Mantra into his ear. The people shouted 'Haribol.'"⁵²

Mahaprabhu then donned saffron clothes and took Dand and Kamandalu in his hands. Thus, says Vrindavan Das, appeared the Sannyas form of Bhagavan, resplendent with the light of millions of moons and intoxicated always with love for Himself, which Vyasadeva had already described in Vishnu-sahasranam in the following words.⁵³

Sannyaskrit samah shanto nishtha shanti-parayanah/

—Sahasranam-stotra,75.

Keshav Bharati then began to think what name to give to the new Sannyasi. As customary in the Sankara Sampradaya, the surname 'Bharati' should have been appended to his new name. He did not think it proper to do that, because the title 'Bharati' was the title of Mayavadi Sannyasis, who were against Krishna-Bhajan. He thought that he should give him some name, which signified that he was himself always Krishna-conscious, that is, intoxicated with Krishna-*prem* and strived to make others Krishna-conscious through Krishna-kirtan. At that time goddess Sarasvati appeared on his tongue and made him say to Mahaprabhu, "Your name is Shri Krishna-Chaitanya."⁵⁴

⁵² ibid, 154 - 160.

⁵³ ibid, 161 - 167.

⁵⁴ ibid, 169 - 179.

The people shouted, "Shri Krishna Chaitanya Ki Jai!" and showered flowers upon him. He stood up and began to dance in ecstasy, asking the devotees to sing by shouting '*bol, bol*'. The devotees sang, while he danced. Sattvik-*bhavs* appeared on his body. The tidal waves of *bhav* in his heart rose higher and higher and made him roar repeatedly like a thousand lions maddened with *prem*. His Dand and Kamandalu fell off he knew not when.⁵⁵ Dancing in madness he embraced the Guru. The Guru was charged with Krishna-*prem*. He lost consciousness and began to dance shouting 'Haribol'. His Dand and Kamandalu also fell off. He danced in ecstasy with the Lord of Vaikunth. The Guru and Shishya danced together throughout the night in utter forgetfulness of themselves and the world.⁵⁶

In the morning they regained outward consciousness. Mahaprabhu made obeisance to the Guru and said, "Kindly give me leave. I shall go to Vrindavan, where lives Shri Krishna, the life of my life, the Soul of my soul."

The Guru said, "I shall also go with you and enjoy Sankirtan always." Mahaprabhu took him along with him. Guru and Shishya started together, as says Vrindavan Das in *Chaitanya Bhagavat*.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ C. Bh., 3, 1, 8 - 12.

⁵⁶ ibid, 13 - 21.

⁵⁷ ibid, 22 - 25.

No other biographer mentions that Keshav Bharati went with Mahaprabhu. It appears that they started together, but Bharati could not keep pace with Mahaprabhu, who darted to Vrindavan like an arrow in his anxiety to meet Krishna. So he had to give up his company and return.

Kaviraj Gosvami says that Mahaprabhu darted towards Vrindavan, reciting the same Sloka, which, as mentioned in *Shrimad Bhagavat*, the Brahmin of Avantipur recited while going to Vrindavan (Bh. 11, 23, 57). The Sloka says, "I will follow the path laid down by the great saints of the past. Following them I shall go to Vrindavan and don the dress of a *bhiksuka* (beggar) or Sannyasi as my *paramatma-nishtha*, that is, as a sign of my renunciation of the world and everything that pertains to it, to remind me of the same. I shall cross the ocean of the world by doing *Krishna-Bhajan* in seclusion."⁵⁸

As Mahaprabhu went, he was so much excited with the thought of doing *Krishna-Bhajan* there in seclusion that he had no outward consciousness. He did not know which way he was going. He did not know whether he needed anything to eat or not. He did not know whether it was day or night. He was only thinking that he was going to Vrindavan. Murari Gupt says, "He went chanting the name of Krishna, sometimes laughing, sometimes weeping, sometimes singing. Sometimes he fell and walked again and

⁵⁸ C. C., 2, 3, 5 - 7.

sometimes he slept on the ground.”⁵⁹ Nityanand, Chandrashekhar, and Mukund followed him, Nityanand shouting, “Prabhu! Wait, I am also coming.” But he was so absorbed in the thought of Vrindavan that he had no outward consciousness. The words of Nityanand did not reach his ears. Nityanand was, however, waiting for an opportunity, when outward consciousness would return to him and he would somehow turn him back, because he had not eaten anything for three days.⁶⁰ The opportunity came, when some cowherd boys were inspired to shout “Haribol” on seeing him. He regained some outward consciousness on hearing the sound of ‘Haribol’. Caressing the boys gently he said, “Yes. Yes. Go on.”⁶¹

Nityanand thought that he would ask the boys about the way to Vrindavan. He beckoned one of them to come near. He whispered into his ear that if Mahaprabhu asked him to show the way to Vrindavan, he should point Eastward.⁶² The device worked. After enquiring about the path from the boys Mahaprabhu turned East towards the bank of Ganga. Then Nityanand said to Chandrashekhar, “I will take Mahaprabhu to the house of Advaitcharya in Shantipur. You go quickly and tell him that he should soon arrive with a boat on this side of the river to take Mahaprabhu to his house. After that you go to Navadvip and bring

⁵⁹ *Kadacha*, 3, 3, 15 - 16.

⁶⁰ *Kadacha*, 3, 3, 18.

⁶¹ C. C., 2, 3, 10 - 11.

⁶² *ibid*, 15.

Ma Shachi and the devotees to the house of Advaitcharya.”⁶³

Within a short time Mahaprabhu reached a spot on the bank of Ganga, from where the house of Advaitcharya was only a short distance on the other side of the river. At this stage Nityanand, who had so far been following him unnoticed, came before him. He was still not fully conscious. Therefore Nityanand said, “Prabhu, I am Nityanand.” He looked at him attentively and said, “What Sripad!”

“Yes, Your Nityanand,” replied Nityanand.

Then feeling agreeably surprised he said, “Sripad! How are you here?”

“I am also going to Vrindavan with you. I have been following you.”

Mahaprabhu was happy to hear this. He said, “You have done well. We shall both do *Bhajan* in some quiet place in Vrindavan. How far is Vrindavan from here?”

“It is only a short distance from here. You can see the Yamuna flowing over there,” said Nityanand, pointing towards Ganga. Mahaprabhu was excited. Overwhelmed with *bhav* he ran and plunged into the river. After bathing he came out. While still in wet clothes he stood on the bank and began to recite a *Stuti* in praise of Yamuna.⁶⁴

⁶³ ibid, 18 - 20.

⁶⁴ ibid, 23 - 25.

In the meantime Advaitcharya came with a new *kaupin* and *bahirva*. His heart wept to see Mahaprabhu in that condition. He wept to think that Mahaprabhu, whose curly hair easily stole the hearts of people, whom people called the King of Nadiya, when they saw him moving about with his devotees in princely dress, was standing before him as a recluse with shaven head, hungry and fatigued after a journey of three days without food, waiting for his wet clothes to dry up on his body, because he did not have other clothes to change.

Advaitcharya came out of the boat and made obeisance to him. Trying to recognize Advaitcharya, he said, "You are Advaitcharya. Aren't you? How are you here in Vrindavan?"⁶⁵

Advaitcharya said, "Prabhu! You are just now on the bank of Ganga, though wherever you go there is Vrindavan."⁶⁶

On hearing what Advaitcharya said, Mahaprabhu fully regained his outward consciousness. He looked angrily at Nityanand and said, "Sripad! You have duped me. You pretended to take me to Yamuna and have brought me to Ganga."⁶⁷

Sripad hung his head down. But Advaitcharya said, "Prabhu! Nityanand did not dupe. After Prayag Ganga and Yamuna flow together, Yamuna flows to the west

⁶⁵ ibid, 29.

⁶⁶ ibid, 30.

⁶⁷ *Mahakavya*, 3, 30, 32 - 34.

of Ganga. This is what the Shastras say. So you have bathed in Yamuna not in Ganga. Sripad has done well by bringing You here. You have not taken any food for three days. You are fatigued and weak. You accompany me to my house, have food and rest and then go to Vrindavan. We shall also go with you and take you there safely.”⁶⁸

Mahaprabhu was pacified. He wore the *kaupin* and *bahirva* brought by Advaitcharya and stepped into the boat. Mahaprabhu sat in the middle. Nityanand and Advaitcharya sat on his either side like his bodyguards. There was no end to their joy on finding him safe and secure in their midst. Nityanand was always joyful and always made others dance with joy. But so far the sea of his joy was stagnant and motionless. Now a favourable wind had set in and the waves of joy had started rising high. In his joyful mood he said to Advaitcharya, “Look Thakur, you are taking us home. We believe you will give us plenty to eat.”

Advaitcharya was in a thoughtful mood. He simply nodded. Nityanand said, “Let us know clearly. Prabhu and I have not taken even a morsel for four days. But let aside Prabhu. He was always drinking *premamrita* (nectar of love). For him there was no hunger or thirst. I have been on the verge of death on account of hunger. Now my life hangs by a thread. Therefore I ask whether you will give me as much to eat as I am hungry.”

⁶⁸ ibid, 32 - 36.

Advaitcarya said, "Sripad! I am obliged to you for the great task you have so ingeniously accomplished that not only food, I shall give you even my life, if you want."

In the meantime the boat reached the eastern coast. To avoid the crowd, which had already started gathering for the *darshan* of Mahaprabhu, Advaitcharya hurriedly took him to his house and closed the door from inside.

REJOICINGS IN SHANTIPUR

After *bhog* was offered and Arati performed Mahaprabhu and Nityanand were made to sit for taking *prasad*. Advaitcharya's wife Sita Devi had prepared a rich menu. Everything was served in abundance. Mahaprabhu said, "Acharya! You have served in huge quantity. The Sannyasi should eat only as much as is necessary for sustenance. Please remove the rest."

Advaitcharya said, "No, Prabhu. This hypocrisy will not work. I know what kind of Sannyasi you are. In Nilachal you⁶⁸ eat mountains of different kinds of *bhog*. Here you pretend to be a Sannyasi. For four days you have not taken even a drop of water. Now you say you will eat only a little. You will have to eat everything. If you do not, you will compel me to commit suicide."

⁶⁸ As Jagannath

Mahaprabhu, who is always subservient to the devotee, had to obey.

Advaitcharya did not have to say anything to Nityanand. He was so happy to find the younger brother that he had forgotten everything about Sannyas and was eating like a voluptuous eater. When he had eaten his fill, he said, "I knew already that I shall not have my fill. Today also I have to fast. No use blaming anyone. One gets only what is written in one's fate."

Advaitcharya said, "You are Sannyasi. You live on fruits and leaves. When do you get rice and pulses and the dainties to eat? You should thank your stars for getting substantial meal to eat today. Now get up. It is not good for a Sannyasi to eat too much."

Nityanand, pretending to be angry ,applied some rice and pulses to the body of Advaitcharya and said, "Take your rice and pulses."

Advaitcharya began to dance with joy, saying, "Aha! Avadhut's remains applied to my body! I am purified."

Nityanand said, "It was the *prasad* of Thakur. By calling it the remains of Avadhut, you have committed a serious offence against the *prasad*. Now you will have to feed hundred Sannyasis like me to expiate the offence."

After Mahaprabhu had eaten he was made to rest. There was no end to Avaitacharya's happiness to find him at his house. In the evening he held Mahaprabhu's feet and said, "Prabhu! For a long time you have been

dodging me. Today I have found You. I shall bind and keep you at home forever.⁶⁹ Then he began to dance and sing:

*"ki kahah re sakhi (ajaku) anand ora/
chiradine madhava mandire mora//*

—O Sakhi! I do not know how to describe to you my happiness on finding Madhava (Krishna) in my Kunj, where he will now remain for ever.”

Advaitcharya was thus giving vent to his happiness on having his Krishna with him at his house. But Mahaprabhu was weeping in separation from his Krishna. The fire of separation, which had been burning slowly in his heart, suddenly blazed up on hearing the song of Advaitcharya. He fell senseless on the ground.⁷⁰ Acharya stopped singing and dancing. Mukund understood that Mahaprabhu was seized by the *bhav* of Radha in separation from Krishna. Advaitcharya sang a song, corresponding to the *bhav* of union, which added fuel to the fire by contrast. Therefore he sang the following song corresponding to his *bhav*:

*"ha! ha! pranapriya sakhi ki na hailo more/
kanuprem visha mora tanu mana jare//
ratri dina porhe mana soyasti na paun/
jahan gele kanu paun tahan chali jaun//*

—Ha Ha Sakhi! What has happened to me! The

⁶⁹ C. C., 2, 3, 114.

⁷⁰ C. C., 2, 3, 116 - 117.

poison of Krishna-*prem* burns my body and mind. My mind burns day and night and there is no peace for me. I shall go where He is gone, wherever He may be.”⁷¹

When Mukund started singing, Mahaprabhu’s consciousness was revived. Acharya lifted Mahaprabhu and he began to dance. He was so much overwhelmed by the song that all the Sattvik-*bhavs* attacked him at once and he again fell senseless on the ground. His breathing stopped. The devotees were filled with great anxiety. But that was the state of deep trance, in which the devotee appears to be dead, but does not actually die. In the state of trance Krishna appeared before him. He suddenly stood up, roaring aloud in *bhav* and began to dance, saying ‘*bol, bol*’. The devotees sang *kirtan*, while he danced. Though he was weak after his fast for three days, he continued to dance for three hours. He stopped dancing only when Nityanand held him in his arms. Advaitcharya then stopped *kirtan* and made him sleep.⁷²

Mahaprabhu had his meal and slept. But who can describe the condition of the devotees in Navadvip at this time? They had been fasting and weeping since Mahaprabhu left Navadvip. But when Chandrashekhar went and informed them that he had taken Sannyas, they felt as if life had gone out of them. Shachi became inert and motionless like an artificial figure of woman.⁷³

⁷¹ ibid, 121 - 122.

⁷² ibid, 123 - 133.

⁷³ C. Bh., 3, 1, 38.

Srivas fell senseless on the ground.⁷⁴ The condition of the other devotees was more or less the same. Everyone wept and rolled on the ground in agony. Every one resolved to commit suicide by drowning in the Ganga at night.⁷⁵ But before the night approached they heard a voice from heaven, asking them not to commit suicide, because they were about to find Mahaprabhu in their midst.⁷⁶ Therefore they decided not to commit suicide. But how could they rest at peace until they actually had the *darshan* of Mahaprabhu? They had heard Mahaprabhu telling them that the Name of Bhagavan was more merciful than Bhagavan and that Bhagavan was bound to appear, if they chanted His Name. So they sat round Ma Shachi and began to chant Mahaprabhu's Name.⁷⁷

The device worked. Mahaprabhu, who had been running to the West was made to turn East. He reached Shantipur and the next morning he said to Nityanand, "Shripada! I am concerned about the devotees in Navadvip. They may still be weeping and wailing in my separation. You go to Navadvip. Pacify them by saying that on my way to Nilachal I am waiting to meet them here at the house of Advaitcharya once before I leave and you bring them here."⁷⁸

⁷⁴ ibid, 36 - 37.

⁷⁵ ibid, 41.

⁷⁶ ibid, 45 - 47.

⁷⁷ C. M., 14, 37 - 40.

⁷⁸ C. Bh., 3, 1, 127 - 130.

"Should I bring all?" asked Nityanand, keeping in mind Vishnupriya. Mahaprabhu said, "All except one."

Nityanand did not have the courage to say anything further.

Nityanand had already sent Chandrashekhar to Navadvip. He also started for Navadvip next morning. Navadvip is about ten kilometers from Shantipur. After going half the way he tarried. He began to think about the condition of Shachi and Vishnupriya, whether they were alive or not. The thought made him benumbed and lifeless. With great difficulty he started again. On reaching Navadvip he felt that the birds and animals, the trees and creepers, the lanes and by-lanes were all weeping. When he reached near the house of Shachi, he felt like being swallowed by the yawning silence of the place. He picked courage and entered the courtyard of the house. In gentle and broken voice he said, "Ma! Ma!" Shachi recognized his voice and rushed out with Malini and others. Vishnupriya also came with Kanchana and stood at the door. On seeing Nityanand standing, sad and silent with his head downcast, Shachi shrieked out, "Speak, speak Nitai, where is my Nimai?"⁷⁹

"Ma! He has taken Sannyas. But he is at the house of Advaitcharya in Shantipur. He has sent me to take you there."

Ma had heard about Nimai's Sannyas from Chandrashekhar and fainted. On hearing about it from Nityanand, she again fainted. On regaining consciousness, she said to Malini, "Let us go to the house of Advaitcharya." But the next moment she said, "No, I will not go. I cannot see Nimai as a recluse. I shall commit suicide by drowning in Ganga." Then she cried, "Nimai! Nimai!" and began to run towards Shantipur.

On hearing about the arrival of Nityanand many people had come to the house of Shachi. They surrounded her and said, "Ma! Wait, the palanquin is coming. You will go on the palanquin. We shall all go with you and bring Nimai to Nadiya."

The palanquin came. Many people, devotees and non-devotees, even those, who had been hostile to Mahaprabhu, assembled to go to Shantipur to see him in the Vesha of Sannyasi.

Malini and the ladies took Shachi to the palanquin. She was going to step into it, when she saw Vishnupriya, standing at the door with her Sakhi Kanchana and looking at her through the veil with tears coursing down her cheeks. Shachi looked at her and, instead of getting into the palanquin, remained standing still and benumbed. She was already shedding tears. But the tears now started streaming out more profusely. People did not take long to understand what had transpired between her and her daughter-in-law and why she was weeping more bitterly. They also

began to weep. Shachi stared at Nityanand in mute bewilderment.

Nityanand was also watching and shedding tears. It was a difficult situation for him. He stood puzzled for sometime, not knowing what to do. But he was reminded of Mahaprabhu's words- "Bring all, except one." He said with throat choked with emotion, but in a tone that was loud and firm, "Prabhu has ordered not to bring Srimati."

Shachi was stunned. She said, "I will also not go." She went back and stood weeping by the side of Vishnupriya. The people also stood aghast, shedding tears.

Vishnupriya said to Kanchana, resting her head upon her shoulder in sorrow and despair, "The whole of Nadiya is going for the *darshan* of my Prabhu. The only one prevented is me. What is my fault? My only fault is that I am his wife, his *ardhangani* (better half). Is this my fortune or misfortune?" But the sobs and tears of the people reminded her of the words of Prabhu, who had said, "Vishnupriya! I have come this time to weep and make you weep. Your tears and mine will make the people shed tears. The tears will wash away the filth from their hearts and make them fit for *Krishna-Bhajan*. It is your duty to cooperate with me in this." She then said to Ma, "Ma! If you do not go, Prabhu will be unhappy. You must go. I must remain here. He will be unhappy if I disobey his command." Shachi then went and sat in the palanquin.

When the palanquin reached the house of Advaitcharya, Mahaprabhu saw Ma coming out of it. It is the custom amongst the Sannyasis not to bow down to anyone. But as soon as Ma came out of the palanquin, Mahaprabhu lay prostrate before her. She threw her arms round him and kissed him again and again, while still weeping and bathing him with the tears of her eyes. Then she made him sit before her and said, "What have you done Nimai? You have become a recluse. Now you will go from door to door and ask for *bhiksa*. Even the birds and animals will weep to see you. How shall I, your mother, bear it. You have been so unkind to me. But you should have at least thought of that innocent girl. You left her in her young age to be looked after by your old and widowed mother and came away. What kind of religion or virtuousness is this? Do you know what is happening to her? Do you know what is happening to your devotees, whether they are alive or dead? Why have you become so heartless?"

Prabhu bent his head with shame and began to shed tears. After some time he said, wiping his tears, "Ma! I can never rid myself of my debt to you. Even if I have taken Sannyas my love for you is the same. I shall do whatever you say after due deliberation. Even if you say that I should give up Sannyas and go home with you, I shall obey."⁸⁰

Ma felt somewhat assured. Nityanand and the

⁸⁰ *Mahakavya*, 3, 142 - 145.

other devotees also felt assured and relieved. They thought Prabhu had already promised to do as Ma would say. What will Ma say? Will she say, "You should kill me and preserve your Sannyas?

MA ADVISES MAHAPRABHU TO RETAIN SANNYAS

Several days passed at the house of Advaitcharya in dance and kirtan. Shachi cooked herself everyday and made Mahaprabhu eat different delicacies in her own presence. One day all the devotees sat round her. Nityanand said to her, "Ma! Prabhu has promised that if you order, he will give up Sannyas and go home. Why not ask him to do so, so that your life is saved as well as ours?"

Ma heaved a sigh and cast her head down. She was silent for a while, then said in a low tone, "Do I want that Nimai should be Sannyasi and go begging from door to door? If I ask him to give up Sannyas our suffering will be over, but he will lose his *dharma*.⁸¹ I may end my suffering by dying, but I will not destroy his *dharma*. He knows that I cannot do that. That is why he has made that promise. He should remain a Sannyasi and follow the Sannyas-*dharma*. But tell him to live in Nilachal, which is near, so that the people going there may keep me informed about him."⁸² She said this and became silent and grave.

⁸¹ Religion, principle, duty.

⁸² *Mahakavya*, 3, 178 - 182.

The devotees were aghast. They said, "Ma! What do you say? Will you yourself bid farewell to Prabhu? What will you tell Vishnupriya? What shall we say to the people of Nadiya? Shall we say that we had gone to bring Prabhu back, but Ma bade him farewell for ever?" But Ma remained unmoved.

Ma was great. She was blessed! If she were not like that, would Mahaprabhu have chosen to be born as her son?

When the devotees went and told Mahaprabhu about Ma's decision, he came and made obeisance to her. Carried away by a tidal wave of affection for the mother, he began to sing and dance happily and circumambulate her. A fountain of tears gushing forth from his eyes bathed her. The devotees also could not check the flow-tide of their tears.

TO NILCHAL

After living happily with the devotees at the house of Advaitcharya for ten days, Mahaprabhu said to them early in the morning the next day, "I am going to Nilachal. My heart is pining for the *darshan* of the Lord of Nilachal. I go." He said this and ran towards Nilachal. Shachi shrieked out, "Nimai is gone!" and fell senseless. The devotees ran after Mahaprabhu.

After going some distance Mahaprabhu stopped. He said to the devotees, "Brethren! Now you go home. With me shall go only the renunciants—Nityanand,

Jagadanand, Mukund, Damodar and Govind. The medicine for the pain you may suffer in separation from me is Krishna-kirtan. I assure you that those of you, who will do Krishna-*Bhajan* day and night with love, will see me sitting in your lap." The devotees had to obey.

Everyone went back. Mahaprabhu began to walk more briskly. But after going some distance, when he looked back, he saw that the old Advaitcharya was still following him, staggering and panting heavily. His body was sweating; his face was laden with grief; but there was not a tear in his eyes. Mahaprabhu stopped again. He said to Advaitcharya, "Acharya! I had thought that after my Sannyas you would take care of Ma and my devotees and assuage them. But if you be so impatient and impulsive, who will take care of them?"

Advaitcharya said, "Prabhu! I have been following you, because I want to tell you about my dreadful plight. On seeing that you have become a Sannyasi at this young age, the young and old, friends and foes and even the birds and animals are weeping. But there is not a drop of tear in the eyes of this hypocrite. I feel that what I had regarded as my *prem* was not *prem*, but hypocrisy. Even that I have now lost. I do not know now what is going to happen to me."⁸³

Mahaprabhu laughed and said, "Acharya! The fault

⁸³ C. M., 15, 69 - 71.

is not yours, but mine. I know that there is no one, who loves me more than you. But if you were grieved more than anyone else on account of my separation, how could you assuage the grief of my devotee? Therefore I tied your *prem* in my *bahirvas*.⁸⁴ But since you feel so much pained without it, I am going to until it." So saying he untied the knot in his *bahirvas*.⁸⁵ Advaitcharya shouted "Ha Gaurnga!" and began to weep and roll on the ground in *prem*.

Mahaprabhu said, "Your desire is fulfilled. Now control your *bhav* and go and assuage the devotees in grief. If you do not do that, I will not be able to move even a step forward." He lifted Advaitcharya from the ground, gave him a loving embrace and swiftly walked away.

⁸⁴ Outer garment.

⁸⁵ ibid, 74.

CHAPTER XVIII

ON WAY TO NILACHAL

Mahaprabhu started for Nilachal, accompanied by Sri Nityanand, Gadadhar, Jagadanand and Mukund Datta.¹ Mahaprabhu accepted them as his companions on the journey, because they had all renounced the world like him. He wanted, however, to make sure that their renunciation was genuine. Therefore at the very commencement of the journey he asked them if they had with them any worldly possessions, howsoever trifling. Each of them replied he had none. Mahaprabhu felt happy and satisfied.²

A true renunciant is one, who surrenders himself wholly to the Lord, depends wholly upon the Lord and desires nothing except the pleasure of the Lord. The companions of Mahaprabhu had surrendered themselves completely to Mahaprabhu. They thought of nothing except Mahaprabhu, desired nothing except the pleasure of Mahaprabhu and did nothing except what pleased Mahaprabhu. They were different from

¹ C. C., 2, 3, 206. C. Bh. also mentions the names of Govind and Brahmanand (3. 2. 35).

² C. Bh., 3, 2, 36 - 39.

him only in body, one in mind and soul. Accompanied by them Mahaprabhu went along the bank of Ganga, singing and dancing until he reached Chatrabhog, where the Ganga branches out into a hundred streams.

Mahaprabhu bathed in the Ganga and changed his clothes. He shouted, 'Ha Jagannath! Ha Jagannath!' and wept. His clothes became wet on account of the tears that flowed from his eyes. Every time he changed the clothes they became wet. Vrindavan Das Thakur says, "From the tears that flowed from his eyes, it appeared that Ganga, flowing in a hundred streams had assumed two forms—one that flowed on land in Chatrabhog, the other that flowed from the eyes of Mahaprabhu.³ The merciful Lord Jagannath in the form of Mahaprabhu thus yearning so intensely for Himself, taught His Bhakti to the jivas of the world.⁴

As Mahaprabhu was thus weeping and rolling on the ground on account of the intensity of his *bhav*, Ramachandra Khan, the governor of Chatrabhog, happened to pass from that side. He was stupefied to see Mahaprabhu's yearning for Jagannath. He got down from the palanquin and made obeisance to him. When Mahaprabhu's *bhav* subsided, he said, "Who are you?"

"I am your servant," replied Ramchandra. Others said, "He is the governor of this place."

³ C. Bh., 3, 2, 80.

⁴ ibid, 116 - 117.

Mahaprabhu was happy to hear this. He said, "I want to go to Nilachal next morning. Can you help?"

Ramchandra said, "Prabhu! The times are bad. Bengal and Orissa are enemies. The border between the two countries is sealed. The tourists, who cross it, run the risk of life. I shall also run a risk by arranging somehow to send you secretly to the other side of the river, where the soldiers of Orissa stand on guard. I do not, however, mind risking my life, position and everything, if I can be of some service to you.⁵ I shall come with a boat before dawn tomorrow and arrange for your secret landing on the other side of the river."

Mahaprabhu passed the night in dance and *kirtan* with his companions. The next morning Ramchandra Khan arrived with the boat, which they boarded. As the boat started Mahaprabhu cast a loving glance at Ramchandra to bless him. Overwhelmed with *bhav* at the thought that he was soon going to land in Orissa, where lived Lord Jagannath, he started his love-dance and the companions started *kirtan*. Mahaprabhu's dance made the boat turn up and down. *Sankirtan* also destroyed the secrecy of the excursion. The boat-man was scared. He said, "Prabhu! What are you doing? If the boat capsizes, we shall be eaten up by the crocodiles. If somehow we land on the other side, the sound of *kirtan* will alert the soldiers on guard or invite

⁵ ibid, 102.

the tigers, who loiter about freely on that side in search of prey. By your dance and *kirtan* you are inviting death for yourselves and for me. Please for your sake and mine, stop dance and *kirtan* so that you land secretly and safely on the other side.⁶

The companions stopped *Sankirtan* at the boatman's entreaties. But Mahaprabhu roared aloud, "Why fear, while the *Sudarshan Chakra* is there which always protects the Vaishnavs? Don't you see the *Chakra*? Carry on *kirtan*."⁷ The companions gathered courage and again started *Sankirtan*.

Vrindavan Das says that Mahaprabhu thus made not only his companions, but all devotees for all times fearless by assuring them that the *Chakra* of Vishnu always protects them and there is no power on earth that can do any harm to them.⁸

Mahaprabhu landed in Orissa with *Sankirtan*. He bathed in the Ganga on a *ghat*, called Gangaghat, where exists a temple of Shiva, installed by Yudhishtir. After bathing he made obeisance to Shiva. then he asked his companions to stay there in the temple, while he went out for *bhiksa*. He went for *bhiksa* inspite of their entreatise to allow them to do *bhiksa*. After sometime he returned with edibles of different kinds generously given to him in *bhiksa* by the people. The companions laughed to see the provisions brought in

⁶ ibid, 134 - 137.

⁷ ibid, 139 - 142.

⁸ ibid, 143 - 145.

huge quantity and said, "We feel assured that we are safe in his hands. He can easily feed us all."⁹ Jagadanand cooked and they ate after offering the food to the Lord. After passing the night in *Sankirtan* in that village, the next morning they proceeded onwards.

NITYANAND BREAKS MAHAPRABHU'S DAND

Soon they reached the Svarnarekha river. They bathed in the river and again started walking. Mahaprabhu and his other companions were walking swiftly, while Nityanand and Jagadanand were trailing behind slowly. When they were left far behind, Mahaprabhu sat down at one place and began to wait for them.

Jagadanand carried the Dand of Mahaprabhu. He went somewhere for Bhiksa leaving the Dand under the care of Nityanand. Nityanand took the Dand in his hand, looked at it and laughed. He said to the Dand, "O Dand! You have the audacity to ride the shoulders of One, Whom I carry in my heart!" Saying so he broke the Dand into three pieces and threw them on the ground.¹⁰

When Jagadanand returned, he was taken aback to see the three pieces of the Dand lying on the ground. He said to Nityanand, "Who broke the Dand?"

⁹ C. Bh., 3, 2, 161.

¹⁰ C. Bh., 3, 2, 207 - 208. According to *Caitanya-Caritamrita* the Dand was broken by Nityanand at Kamdapur (C.C., 2, 5, 141).

"The Person, Who owned it," replied Nityanand.
"Who else has the power to break his Dand?"¹¹

Jagadanand was filled with great anxiety, but he did not say anything. He picked up the broken pieces of the Dand and went with Nityanand where Mahaprabhu was waiting for them. He threw the broken pieces of the Dand before him. As soon as Mahaprabhu saw the broken Dand, he said, "How did it break? Was it used in fighting with some one?"

"Nityanand fought with it and broke it," replied Jaganand.

Mahaprabhu said to Nityanand, "Why did you break the Dand?"

"I have broken only a piece of bamboo. If you want to punish me for breaking a bamboo, you may," replied Nityanand.¹²

Mahaprabhu said angrily, "The Dand, which, according to the Shastras, is the abode of gods, is, according to you, only a piece of bamboo! Dand was my only companion. That is gone. I am now alone. So I shall go alone to Jagannath. I will not go with you. Either you go ahead, or let me go alone and you go after some time."¹³

No one had the courage to say anything against. Mukund said, "You go ahead. We shall come later."

¹¹ ibid, 217 - 218.

¹² ibid, 224.

¹³ ibid, 225, 232 - 233.

Mahaprabhu went ahead. He reached a village called Jaleshvar after the name of Jaleshvar Shiva, whose temple is there. He was overwhelmed with *bhav* to see Jaleshvar Shiva. He roared aloud in *bhav* and sang and danced. After some time his companions also came. They began to sing and dance with him. He was happy to sing and dance in their company. His anger subsided. After *Sankirtan* he embraced everyone of them.

He took Nityanand lovingly in his lap and said, "Shripada! I had expected that you would prevent me in my madness from transgressing any of the rules of Sannyas. Instead of doing that I find that you want me to do everything that will increase my madness. Swear that you will never do that again. You know that I am completely in your hands. You can shape and mould me as you like."¹⁴ He did not say anything else regarding the breaking of the Dand. Apparently he had reconciled himself to it.

We have said before that Nityanand broke his own Dand, because it was a sign of Vaidhi Bhakti. How could Mahaprabhu, the purpose of Whose incarnation was to preach Raganuga Bhakti by precept and example, retain the Dand? Vrindavan Das says that Nityanand broke the Dand, because he knew that Mahaprabhu wanted it to be broken. Nityanand and Mahaprabhu are but two different manifestations of the same spiritual principle and they know each other's

¹⁴ C. Bh., 3, 2, 254 - 256.

mind well.¹⁵ Mahaprabhu had only pretended to be angry with Nityanand for breaking the Dand.

VISIT TO REMUNA: THE STORY OF KSIRACHORA GOPINATH

Mahaprabhu and his companions passed the night at Jaleshvar. The next morning they went to Remuna, where is installed in a temple the beautiful image of Gopinath. When Mahaprabhu made obeisance to Gopinath, the flowers of the *chuda* of Gopinath fell upon his head. Mahaprabhu was overwhelmed with *bhav* at the mercy of Gopinath. For a long time he danced and sang before Him in ecstasy. Then he began to relate to his companions an interesting episode relating to Gopinath and Madhavendra Puri, which he had heard from Ishvar Puri.

He said, "Madhavendra Puri was the Guru of Ishvar Puri. Intoxicated with Krishna-*prem* he went about from place to place and never stayed long anywhere. He also never asked for *bhiksa* from anyone. He ate whatever someone gave him of his own. If no one gave anything, he fasted. Once he happened to go to Govardhan. He circumambulated Govardhan, bathed in Govind Kund and sat down under a tree. It was evening. He had not eaten anything. A young cowherd came with a pot full of milk. He placed the pot before him and said, "Puri! Drink this milk. Why are you fasting? Why don't you beg?"

¹⁵ ibid, 210 - 211.

"Puri was stupefied to see the beauty of the boy and pleased to hear his sweet voice. He said, "Who are You? Where do you live? How did you come to know that I was fasting?" The boy said, "I am a cowherd. I live in this village. No one in this village has to fast. Some Sadhus beg for food, some for milk. They get what they want. Some, who do not beg, are fed by me. Some women, who were going to fetch water, saw you sitting here. They have sent me to you with this milk. I am just now going to milk cows. I will come later to take this pot."¹⁶ The boy disappeared and was never seen again.

"Puri Gosvami wondered who that boy was, how he came and suddenly disappeared. The boy had given a hint regarding his personality by saying, "I feed them, who do not beg." But He did not let him understand it then by His Maya. He left him to ponder over it, when He was gone.

"Puri Gosvami drank the milk. He was surprised by its supernatural flavour and smell. He waited for the boy, who had promised to come to take away the pot. The boy never came. This increased his anxiety to know who he was. He did not get sleep at night. Towards the end of night he saw the same boy in a dream. The boy held him by the hand and took him to a Kunj.¹⁷ He said, "I am lying in this Kunj. Here I suffer heat and cold. You take Me out from here, build

¹⁶ C. C., 2, 4, 27 - 30.

¹⁷ An arbour or grove.

a Math at the top of the hill and install and serve Me. I am sold out to you on account of your love. I have long been waiting for you to come so that I may enjoy your loviing service. My name is Gopal (Govardhanadhari). I was originally installed by Bajra, the great-grandson of Krishna. The Pujari hid Me here and ran away on account of the fear of the Mohamadans.”¹⁸

“On waking Puri Gosvami realized that the Boy, who had brought milk for him, was no other than Gopal. He began to weep and wail for not recognizing Him, when He came. He had, however, to compose himself soon and start working according to His command. He called the villagers and told them about the dream. They were very much excited. They went to the spot, indicated by Gopal, with axes and spades and cleared the forest to make their way to the Kunj. After a little digging in the Kunj they found the image of Gopal. It was so heavy that a number of sturdy people together could with great difficulty bring it out and take it to the top of the hill, where they placed it on a slab of stone. The installation ceremony was duly performed. Gopal was bathed, dressed and beautifully decorated and offered *bhog* of different kinds. Thousands of people came every day for His *darshan* from different places and brought offerings of different kinds. For a number of days huge quantity of food was cooked and *prasad* offered to everyone, who came.

¹⁸ ibid, 34 - 42.

Very soon a temple was built and all other arrangements made for right royal service of Gopal. Madhavendra Puri served Gopal with great care and devotion for two years. One day Gopal said to him in a dream, "The heat of my body is not yet gone. It will go, if sandalwood paste is applied to it. Therefore you go to Nilachal and bring sandalwood."¹⁹ In the mean time came from Gaud two Brahmin Vairagis; Madhavendra initiated them and entrusted them with Seva (service) of Gopal. Then he started for Nilachal to bring sandalwood.

"He first went to Gaud and stayed for a few days in Shantipur with his disciple Advaitcharya. Then he started for Nilachal. On the way lay Remuna. He stopped here and came to this temple for the *darshan* of Gopinath. He was overwhelmed with *prem* to see the beautiful figure of Gopinath and began to sing and dance before Him. After dancing for a while he sat down. He had heard about the nice arrangement for different kinds of *bhog* offered to Gopinath at different times. He inquired from the Pujari about the details of the arrangement so that he might make similar arrangement for the *bhog* of his Gopal. The Pujari told him everything. He made special mention of the *Ksir-bhog* offered to Gopinath in twelve earthen pots in the evening. The *Ksir*²⁰ was famous for its ambrosial flavour.

¹⁹ C. C., 2, 4, 104 - 106.

²⁰ Pudding made from milk and rice.

"It was already time for the *ksir-bhog* to be offered. So the *bhog* was offered. Puri began to think that if without asking for the *ksir-prasad*, he got a little, he could taste it and try to offer the same kind of *bhog* to Gopal. After the *bhog* Arati was performed, he attended the Arati and went out of the temple, cursing himself for the desire to taste the *Ksir-prasad*, which, he thought, was an offense.²¹

"In the silence of night, when the market was closed, Madhavendra sat in the marketplace, doing *kirtan*. After Shayan-arati²² the door of the temple was closed and the Pujari slept. The Thakur said to the Pujari in a dream, "Pujari! Get up. Open the door. I have concealed a pot of *Ksir* in the pitcher for Madhavendra Puri, the Sannyasi. He is doing *kirtan* in the market. You go and give it to him."²³ The Pujari got up. He bathed hurriedly and opened the door of the temple. He found the pot containing *Ksir* in the pitcher. He went with the pot to the market and began to shout, "Madhavendra Puri! Where are you? Come and take the pot of *Ksir* Gopinath stole for you." Madhavendra was taken aback. He came and took the *Ksir*. The Pujari told him how Gopinath had stolen it for him and asked him to go and give it to him. He was overwhelmed with *bhav*. Tears streamed out of his eyes. He ate the *Ksir* and wept to think that

²¹ C. C., 2, 4, 121 - 123.

²² Arati performed before the Thakur is made to sleep.

²³ ibid, 131 - 132.

Gopinath had stolen the *Ksir* for him. After he had eaten, he washed the earthen pot, broke it into pieces and tied it in a corner of his *bahirvas*, so that he might eat a small particle of the precious *prasad* of Gopinath everyday.²⁴

"Madhavendra thought that the news regarding Gopinath's stealing of the *Ksir* for him would soon spread and crowds of people would come for his *darshan* in the morning. Therefore he left Remuna before it was dawn and proceeded towards Nilachal.

"The devotee by nature shuns name and fame and tries to avoid them. But name and fame pursue him wherever he goes. The story of Gopinath's stealing *Ksir* for Madhavendra Puri reached Nilachal even before he reached there. People did not take long to recognize him, when he was having the *darshan* of Jagannath and weeping and rolling on the ground in *bhav*. They began to flock to him for *darshan*. He wanted to run away from there, but how could he without collecting sandalwood for Gopal? As soon as he collected sufficient amount of sandalwood and camphor, he started on return journey to Govardhan. On the way he stopped in Remuna to have the *darshan* of Gopinath. He danced before Gopinath in ecstasy. As he danced tears of love and gratitude flowed from his eyes, as if to say in humility, "You love me so much. But how can I? I am so fallen. I do not have even an iota of love. My tears are not the tears of

²⁴ ibid, 138 - 139.

love, but of my utter helplessness in love for want of love.

"The Pujari showed great respect for him and gave him the *Ksir-bhog* of Gopinath and other *prasad* to eat. Madhavendra took the *prasad* and slept in the temple for the night. At night Gopal appeared to him in a dream and said, "Madhava! You need not now bring to Me the sandalwood and camphor you have collected for Me. Give it to the Pujari for the service of Gopinath. There is no difference between my body and the body of Gopinath. Sandal paste with camphor applied to His body will cool down the heat of My body.²⁵

"Madhavendra told the Pujari of Gopinath about the dream and gave him the sandal-wood and camphor. The Pujari happily made arrangements for making the paste and applying it to the body of Gopinath in summer. Madhavendra stayed in the temple until the sandal and camphor were exhausted. After that he returned to Nilachal. He left his body in Nilachal reciting the following *sloka* and attained Siddhi:

"ayi dina-dayadranath he mathuranath
kadavalokyase/
hridayam tvadalokakatara dayita bhramyati kim
karomyaham//

—(Wailing in separation from Krishna, Who has gone to Mathura, Radha says) "O Krishna! You are

²⁵ ibid, 157 - 160.

always kind to the lowly and the helpless. Your heart always melts to see their miserable condition. You are now gone to Mathura. Lord of Mathura! When shall I see You again? My heart does not rest in peace on account of Your separation. I do not know what to do.”²⁷

As Mahaprabhu recited this Slok, he was overwhelmed with *bhav* and fell senseless on the ground. Nityanand took him in his lap. Shortly after he got up with a roar and in a fit of divine madness began to run about. He sometimes laughed, sometimes wept. He tried to recite the Slok again, but could not, because his throat was choked. He said only “*ayi dina, ayi dina*” and wept. Tremor, horripilation, stupor and the other Sattvik *bhavs* stormed his body.²⁸

A crowd gathered in the temple. The sight of the crowd revived Mahaprabhu’s outward consciousness. The Pujari came out after offering *bhog* to Gopinath and doing *arati* and gave the twelve pots of *Ksir-prasad* to him. He returned seven, taking only five for himself and his companions. He passed the night in dance and *kirtan* in the temple. The next morning, after the Mangala Arati²⁹ of Gopinath, he started for Nilachal.

As he walked his mind was still occupied with

²⁶ ibid, 157 - 160.

²⁷ *Padyavali*, 334.

²⁸ C. C., 2, 4, 189 - 199.

²⁹ The first *arati* early in the morning after the Thakur wakes.

the thought of Madhavendra Puri and his *bhakti*. Eulogizing the prem of Madhavendra, he said to his companions, "Madhavendra's *prem* was exemplary. His love for Gopal was so deep and his desire to serve Him was so intense that he made the long journey from Govardhan to Nilachal, without thinking for a moment about the difficulties and the risks it involved. Since he did not beg for food, he had to walk two thousand miles, often without any food for a number of days. On his return journey he had also to carry the load of sandalwood and to pass a number of octroi barriers without any money to pay for octroi. The thought that he was executing the order of Gopal for the happiness of Gopal made him oblivious of all the trials and tribulations of the journey. Carrying the load of sandal-wood on his shoulders, he somehow came up to Remuna, when Gopal stopped him. Gopal's purpose was only to set an example of Bhakti through him, which was fulfilled. Bhakti does not reckon any obstacles or difficulties on its path.³⁰

Ever since the Gopinath of Remuna stole *Ksir* for Madhavendra, He is called Ksirachora Gopinath.

VISIT TO CUTTACK: THE STORY OF SAKSIGOPAL

From Remuna Mahaprabhu went to Yajapur. He passed the night there in dance and *kirtan* before Baraha

³⁰ ibid, 184 - 185.

Bhagavan. From Yajapur he went to Cuttack to have the *darshan* of Saksigopal. He was overwhelmed with *bhav* to see the beautiful Image of Saksigopal. He sang and danced before Him and stayed in the temple for the night. He and his companions enjoyed listening to the story of Saksigopal from Nityanand.

The story is like this. Two simple-hearted Brahmin devotees of Vidyanagar went on pilgrimage. They went to Govardhan, Nandgram, Barasana and other holy places of Vraj, then to Vrindavan. In Vrindavan near the temple of Govind in Keshighat they saw the temple of Gopal. They felt attracted by the beauty of Gopal and the royal style in which He was worshipped and served. They stayed on in the temple of Gopal for a few days to enjoy His *darshan* and *seva* and eat His *prasad*.

One of the Brahmans was old, the other was young. The young Brahmin served the old with all his heart and soul. The elder Brahmin said to the younger, "I feel greatly obliged to you for the service you are doing. Even my son would not have served me so well. You have made it possible for me in my old age to do this pilgrimage without feeling any strain. I shall be ungrateful, if I do not do something for you in return. I promise to marry my daughter to you."³¹

The younger Brahmin was taken aback. He said, "What do you say? Is that possible? You are a wealthy, learned and respectable Brahmin of high caste. I am

³¹ C. C., 2, 5, 17 - 19.

a poor and illiterate Brahamin of low caste. I am not worthy of your daughter. I serve you not because I want anything from you, but because I know that by serving a Brahmin like you I shall be blessed with Krishna-prem.”³²

The elder Brahmin replied, “You need not have any doubt regarding the possibility of marriage. I have determined that I shall marry my daughter to you.”

“You have your wife and sons and other relations. How can you arrive at any decision without consulting them? I am sure they will not agree.”

“They may agree or not. The daughter is mine. I can give her to anyone I like. You should give your consent.”

“I shall give my consent, if you promise to marry your daughter to me before Gopal.”

The elder Brahmin then said before Gopal, “Gopal! You note that I promise to give my daughter to him in marriage.”³³

The younger Brahmin said to Gopal, “Gopal! You stand witness that he promises to marry his daughter to me. If he backs out, I shall depend on You as witness.”³⁴

The two Brahmans returned home. The elder

³² C. C., 2, 5, 20 - 23.

³³ ibid, 31.

³⁴ ibid, 32.

Brahamin called his relations and told them about his resolve to marry his daughter to the younger Brahamin. They burst out at once, "What do you say? You must not say that again. Are you gone mad? If you give your daughter to a boy of a lower caste, will not your caste be destroyed? Will not the people reproach you?"

The Brahamin said, "Come what may, I shall do as I have promised. I cannot go back on my promise solemnly made in a holy place."

The Brahamin's wife and son said, "If you do that, we shall commit suicide by taking poison."

The Brahamin, however, remained adamant. He said to his son, "If I do not keep my promise, the boy will invoke the Panchayat,³⁵ Gopal will bear witness and I shall lose my daughter as well as my *dharma*."

The son said, "You need have no fear on that account. Gopal is an image. The image will not come to bear witness. You need not also tell a lie. You can say that you do not remember anything. If you do that, we shall manage to get the verdict of the Panchayat in our favour. If still you think that you will lose your *dharma*, you have to choose between your *dharma* and your family. We have already decided to commit suicide."

The Brahamin was in a dilemma. He could neither lose his *dharma* nor his family. He agreed to do as

³⁵ The people's court.

the son said, but prayed to Gopal so that He might protect his *dharma* as well as his family.³⁶

The younger Brahamin came to the elder one day and requested with folded hands for the fulfillment of the promise he had made. As soon as the elder Brahamin's son saw him, he pounced upon him with a staff in his hand saying, "Rogue! You want to marry my sister. What are you? You are but a dwarf and you want to grab the moon."³⁷

The younger Brahamin ran away. The next day he invoked the Panchayat. The elders of the village, who constituted the Panchayat, came. They inquired from the elder Brahamin whether it was true that he promised to marry his daughter to the younger Brahamin. The elder Brahamin said, :I do not remember anything." His son then came forward. He said, "Look, while on pilgrimage my father had lots of money. This boy robbed him of his money after giving him *dhatura*³⁸ and making him lose his senses. And now he brings against him the charge of having made a promise, which cannot be fulfilled. You know that he does not deserve to marry my sister."³⁹

The younger Brahamain then narrated the whole story behind the promise solemnly made by the elder Brahamin before Gopal and said, "I shall now invoke

³⁶ C. C., 2, 5, 45 - 46.

³⁷ ibid, 50 - 51.

³⁸ A poisonous fruit.

³⁹ ibid, 58 - 61.

Gopal as witness. He will come and tell you everything. There cannot be a better witness than Him."

The elder Brahamin said, "I agree. If Gopal comes and gives evidence in his favour, I promise before everyone that I shall marry my daughter to him." The son also agreed. He agreed, because he was sure that the Image of Gopal would not come. The elder Brahamin agreed, because he believed that Gopal was merciful, he would come and testify his promise to save his *dharma*.

The younger Brahamin said, "Let the Brahamin write down what he says, so that he may not forget or back out again." The people made him write. The younger Brahamin then said, "The old Brahamin is truthful and god-fearing. He has not spoken the truth, because he does not want his wife and son to commit suicide. I am confident on the strength of his righteousness that Gopal will come to testify his promise and save his *dharma*." Everyone laughed to hear him.

The younger Brahma went to Vrindavan. He lay prostrate before Gopal in obeisance. After telling Him everything about the way in which the elder Brahamin was compelled not to fulfill his promise, he said, "Thakur! You are ever merciful. Have mercy on us both and help us in our plight. I am not concerned about my marriage as much as I am concerned about the old Brahamin's inability to fulfill his promise

inspite of his wish. You kindly go and give evidence before the people so that the Brahamin is able to keep his word and save his *dharma*. You know that if the witness does not give evidence, he commits an offence.”⁴⁰

Gopal said, “You go home and call the meeting of the elders in the village. As soon as you remember Me I shall appear in the meeting and give evidence. It will not be possible for Me to go in the form of Image.”⁴¹

The younger Brahamiin said, “This will not do. Even if You appear in the form of the four-armed Vishnu, Your evidence will not be valid, because You were not a witness to the promise of the Brahamin in that form. You have to go and give evidence in this form.”⁴²

“How can I go in this form? Have you ever heard an Image going anywhere?”

“Thakur! If You are an Image, how are You talking? No one has ever heard an Image talking. You are no other than Gopal, the son of Nand and Yashoda.”⁴³

Gopal laughed and said, “Very well, I shall go behind you, but you must not look at Me. You will

⁴⁰ ibid, 86 - 89.

⁴¹ ibid, 90 -91.

⁴² ibid, 92.

⁴³ ibid, 95.

know from the sound of My *nupurs* that I am following. If you look at Me, I shall stand still at the place, where you look at Me, and not move an inch from there.”⁴⁴

The younger Brahamin returned with Gopal following him. When he reached Vidyanagar, he thought he might once look at Him, before going to inform everyone of His arrival. So he looked. Gopal smiled and stood motionless. He said, “You go and call the people. I shall remain here.”

The younger Brahamin went and told everyone that Gopal had come to give evidence and was standing outside the village. They were very much excited to hear about His arrival. They went and saw Him. The elder Brahamin also went and fell at His feet with tears in his eyes. Gopal said before everyone that He stood witness to the elder Brahamin’s promise to give his daughter in marriage to the younger Brahamin.”⁴⁵

Everyone was stupefied and happy to hear this from the mouth of Gopal. The elder Brahamin married his daughter to the younger Brahamin with the approval of all.

Gopal said to the two Brahamins, “I am pleased with your righteousness and simple, unflinching faith in Me. You ask for a boon.”

The Brahamins said, “Give us the boon that You

⁴⁴ ibid, 96 - 98.

⁴⁵ ibid, 111.

will always remain here so that everyone may know how merciful You are towards Your servants."

Gopal remained there. Both the Brahamins served Him with all their heart and soul. People came from distant places to have His *darshan* and be blessed. The Raja of Vidyanagar also came. He was very much impressed by the beauty of Gopal. He built a temple for Him, in which He was duly installed. Since then He began to be called Saksi Gopal, (Gopal, Who bore witness).

After sometime Purushottam Dev, the King of Orissa, defeated the Raja of Vidyanagar in war and occupied Vidyanagar. Purushottam Dev was a great devotee. He obtained Gopal's permission to take Him to Cuttack, the capital of Orissa, and took Him there.⁴⁶

The Maharaja's wife once came for His *darshan*. She offered Him many ornaments. She had a valuable pearl, which she used to wear in her nose. She wished that Gopal had a hole in His nose, so that she might offer that pearl to Him.⁴⁷ The thought always pestered her. She said to herself, "Gopal is so beautiful. How much more beautiful He could look with the ornament of that pearl hanging from His nose over His lips." She often meditated upon the image of Gopal wearing that pearl in His nose and lost herself in meditation. One night she saw Gopal in a dream, saying to her,

⁴⁶ When Mahaprabhu went to Cuttack Saksi Gopal was there. Later He was taken to a place called 'Satyavadi', near Puri.

⁴⁷ C. C., 2, 5, 124 - 126.

"When I was a child, My mother made a hole in My nose and made Me wear a pearl in the nose. That hole is still there. You can make Me wear the pearl, you want to give.⁴⁸

The next morning the queen went to the temple with the Maharaja. She was happy beyond measure to see the hole in the nose of Gopal. With her own hands she made Him wear the pearl. The Maharaja had a grand festival organized to celebrate the occasion.⁴⁹

Mahaprabhu enjoyed listening the story of Saksi Gopal from Nityanand.

VISIT TO BHUVANESHVAR: THE STORY OF THE SHIVA OF BHUVANESHVAR

From Cuttack Mahaprabhu went to Bhuvaneshvar, called Gupt Kashi (secret Kashi), where lives Shiva. He bathed in Bindusarovar, the pond made by Shiva from the water of all the Tirthas.⁵⁰ Then he went to the temple of Shiva. He was overwhelmed by the *darshan* of Shiva and danced before him in *bhav*.

Vrindavan Das repeats from Skanda Purana the story regarding the manner in which Shiva got the place called Bhuvaneshvar (the Lord of the Universe) after his own name, to live. The story is as follows.

For a long time Shiva lived with Parvati in Kashi.

⁴⁸ ibid, 127 - 129.

⁴⁹ ibid, 130 - 131.

⁵⁰ ibid, 307 - 308.

Then he went to Kailash. Kashi was ruled by a Raja called Kashiraj who worshipped Shiva with great devotion and austerity. Shiva was pleased with him. He appeared before him and said, "Ask for the boon you want." Kashiraj said, "Kindly give me the boon that I may defeat Krishna in war."⁵¹

Shiva is known for his generosity in granting boons. He said, "Raja! You go and wage war against Krishna. I shall be with you. Who can defeat you, when I am there with my powerful weapon—the Pashupata-astra."⁵²

The Raja started with his army to launch an attack against Krishna. Shiva and his army followed him. The omniscient Krishna came to know about it. He ordered His Sudarshan *Chakra* to go and destroy them. The *Chakra* first cut off the head of Kahsiraj, then burnt and reduced Varanasi (Kashi) into ashes.⁵³ Shiva burnt with rage to see the destruction of Varanasi. He sent his *Pashupat-astra* to destroy the *Chakra*. *Pashupat-astra* could not stand even for a moment before the powerful blaze of the *Chakra*. It fled. The *Chakra* then moved towards Shiva. Shiva also had to flee. But he found, like Durvasa, that the *Chakra* pursued him wherever he went. He had, therefore, to take shelter under the feet of Krishna. He sang a hymn of praise to Him and prayed for forgiveness.⁵⁴

⁵¹ C. Bh., 3, 2, 321.

⁵² ibid, 322 - 324.

⁵³ ibid, 329 - 330.

⁵⁴ ibid, 337 - 341.

Krishna withdrew Sudarshan and appeared before him. He said with a smile mixed with anger, "Shiva! What madness had overtaken you? For the sake of that Raja, who was like an insect, you came to fight with me! Don't you know that My *chakra* is invincible? *Brahma-astra*, Pashupata-astra and all the other weapons are trifles before it. It has the power to destroy every weapon together with the person, who weilds it. Still you disregarded Me as no one else has ever done."⁵⁵

Shiva shivered to hear what Krishna said in anger. He held His feet and said prayerfully, "Prabhu! You are the Lord of the universe. You make everyone dance at Your will, just as the wind makes a blade of grass dance as it wills. Your Maya is powerful. You have given me the pride of ego, which is the product of Your Maya. It has complete hold over me and makes me do what it wants. I am helpless. What can I do? I take shelter under Your feet. Kindly forgive me and bless me so that I may never again be pushed by my pride into doing anything wrong. I now desire to live in some lonely place and do nothing except Your *bhajan*. Kindly tell me where I should live?"⁵⁶

Krishna was pleased. He forgave him and said, "You live in Ekamrakavan. This lies within ten *yogans* of Purushottam-Ksetra or Nilachal on the sea-coast, which is My own *dham* and where I always live. The

⁵⁵ ibid, 344 - 349.

⁵⁶ ibid, 354 - 362.

importance of this region is unique. It is eternal. Even at the time of *pralaya* or final dissolution, when all the Brahmandas are destroyed, it remains. Every one, who lives in this region, is like Me. The gods see him as four-armed. This place is outside the jurisdiction of Yama (the Regent of Death). No one can sit in judgement upon the *jivas* residing here, except I. Here sleep is equal to Samadhi, speech to Stuti and walking to Parikrama. Ekamrakavan is in the North of this region. You live there. Your name there will be Bhuvaneshvar.”⁵⁸

Shiva said with folded hands, “Prabhu! I pray that You kindly keep me in Your *dham* near You. I am too full of pride. I do not feel confident that I can overcome my pride, if I stay far from You. I shall be free from its control only if I stay in proximity to You.” He said this and began to weep.⁵⁹

Krishna was moved by his humility and attitude of surrender. He embraced him and said, “Shiva! You are to Me like My own Self. Wherever you live, I am always with you. Still I give you a place in each of My *dhams*. You will, besides living in Ekamrakavan, live in each of My *dhams* as its guardian or protector.”⁶⁰

Vrindavan Das Thakur says that in order to show

⁵⁷ One *yogan* is equal to four *kroses*, approximately 9 miles.

⁵⁸ C. Bh., 3, 2, 364 - 379.

⁵⁹ ibid, 380 - 387.

⁶⁰ ibid, 389 - 392.

how dear Shiva is to Krishna, Mahaprabhu went with his companions to Bhuvaneshvar and worshipped him. He danced before him, singing "Shiva, Ram, Govind! Shiva, Ram, Govind!" and clapping his hands.⁶¹ What the Puranas have said about the relationship between Krishna and Shiva, Mahaprabhu thus proved by his own conduct.⁶²

The question naturally arises, if the relationship between Krishna and Shiva is so close and Krishna regards Shiva as His own Self,⁶³ why did Shiva give Kashiraj the boon to defeat Krishna in war and why he himself joined the war against him? Shiva is regarded as the foremost of the devotees of Krishna (*Vaishnavagraganya*) and the foremost amongst the *jnanis*. With all his *jnana* and Bhakti, was it possible that he should ever think of fighting against Krishna? It was not. But there is nothing that Krishna cannot make possible. Krishna is the Shiksa Guru⁶⁴ of the *jivas*. He gives Shiksa through the Shastras. He also sometimes, out of mercy for the *jivas*, substantiates what he teaches in the Shastras through Lila. He has taught through Gita that His Maya is very powerful and no one can overcome it without surrendering to Him:

⁶¹ ibid, 396 , 399.

⁶² ibid, 397.

⁶³ ibid, 389.

⁶⁴ ibid, 400.

*"daivi hyesa gunamayi mama maya duratyaya/
mameva ye prapadyante mayametam taranti te//"*

He desired to prove by an example that not even the gods can overcome His Maya without surrendering to Him. Therefore He gave *ahamkara* (pride) to Shiva. Ahamkara eclipsed his *jnana* and Bhakti and blinded his vision to the extent that he went to fight against Krishna. He could overcome pride, a powerful agent of Maya, only when he surrendered to Krishna and began to live in proximity to Him. The example proves the absolute necessity of self-surrender. The *jiva* must surrender himself to Krishna and live in close proximity to Him through *japa* and *smarana*, if he wants to be delivered from the bondage of Maya.

From Bhuvaneshvar Mahaprabhu went to Kamalpur, from where the flag of Jagannath's temple is visible. As soon as he saw the flag, he roared aloud in *bhav* and the Sattvik-*bhavs* appeared all over his body. He proceeded towards the temple repeatedly reciting the Sloka:

*"prasadage nivasati purah smeravaktarivindo/
mamaloka smitasuvadano balagopal murtih//"*

—Look how at the top of the temple Balagopal stands smiling and looking at me.”

(C. Bh., 3, 2, 409 - 410.)

Again and again he recited the Sloka. Again and again he fell on the ground overpowered with *bhav*. Vrindavan Das says that even Ananta Deva cannot

describe the intensity of the *bhav* that made him weep and roll on the ground at that time.⁶⁵ Repeatedly reciting the Sloka and making obeisances, he reached Atharanala.

At Atharanala he controlled his *bhav* and said to his companions, "I would go alone for the *darshan* of Jagannath. Either you go first or I." Mukund said, "You go first." Mahaprabhu then ran headlong like a mad lion towards the temple.

⁶⁵ C. Bh., 3, 2, 411 - 412.

CHAPTER XIX

DARSHAN OF JAGANNATH: MERCY ON SARVABHAUM

On reaching the temple Mahaprabhu was so overwhelmed with *bhav* to see Jagannath that he wanted to embrace Him, but he fell senseless on the ground.¹ As Mahaprabhu ran towards Jagannath, the guards present in the temple ran after him to beat him. Fortunately Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya, the Raj-pandit was there at that time. He recognized Mahaprabhu as a Mahapurush and prevented them from doing any harm to him.

Mahaprabhu lay unconscious in the temple for a long time. The time for the *bhog* of Jagannath arrived. Even then consciousness did not revive. Therefore Sarvabhaum took him to his house in that condition with the help of his disciples and the servants in the temple.² He was filled with great anxiety to see that he was lying motionless and breathing seemed to have stopped. But when he put some cotton before his nose, his anxiety was relieved to see it moving slowly though

¹ C. C., 2, 6, 3.

² ibid, 7.

almost imperceptibly. He was convinced to see the Sattvik-*bhavs* in his body that he was in the highest state of Krishna-prem, called *adhirudha-mahabhava*, but was surprised, because that state was noticed only in the *nitya-siddhas*,³ not in the ordinary humans.⁴

After some time, Mahaprabhu's companions also arrived. They performed *kirtan* to revive his consciousness. When his consciousness was revived, Sarvabhaum said, "Svamin! Go and bathe in the sea. Then come and bless me by taking *bhiksa* at my house."

Mahaprabhu bathed and took Jagannath's *prasad* at the house of Sarvabhaum along with his companions. Sarvabhaum made arrangements for his stay in the house of his aunt in a sequestered place in the city.

THE ANXIETY OF GOPINATH ACHARYA

Gopinath was the brother-in-law of Sarvabhaum. He knew Mahaprabhu and his companions and was a great devotee of Mahaprabhu. He told Sarvabhaum all about the life of Mahaprabhu prior to his Sannyas and His divinity. He proved His divinity by quoting Shastras and pointing out all the signs he had of an incarnation. Sarvabhaum was very much impressed by Mahaprabhu, but he was not prepared to accept him as Bhagavan. He said, "Chaitanya has in his young age taken

³ Those eternally free.

⁴ C. C., 2, 6, 8 - 13.

Sannyas Diksa in a low Sampradaya on account of ignorance. I shall get him initiated into 'Tirtha' or 'Sarasvati' sampradaya. I shall also teach him Veda and the essentials of the *jnana-marg* (the path of knowledge) so that he may in this young age be able to control the senses and practise Sannyas faithfully."

Gopinath felt very much aggrieved at this. Nadiya was at that time known as the home of logicians. The people of Nadiya did not accept even the simple facts like the rising of the sun without proof and argument. Even they had been forced to admit that Mahaprabhu was Bhagavan. Scholars and Vaishnavs of the highest order like Advaitcharya also worshipped him with Ganga-water and Tulasi as Bhagavan. But Sarvabhaum, who was well versed in the Shastras, was not prepared to accept him as more than a Sannyasi and a Bhakta. There could not be a more serious cause for grief for a sincere devotee of Mahaprabhu like Gopinath Acharya. On account of his grief he remained without food and drink that day.

Sarvabhaum thought that Chaitanya was a sentimental Sannyasi. His devotees were doing him harm by extolling him to the skies and calling him Bhagavan. He resolved to do something to disillusion them. He did not know that behind the resolution was his own ego. He was the teacher of the Sannyasis. Even the biggest of the Sannyasis took instruction from him and attended his *tol* (school). How could he tolerate a young Sannyasi being respected more than him by every one?

Gopinath went to Mahaprabhu and told him all about his conversation with Sarvabhaum so that he might be angry. But instead of being angry he said, "I am happy to learn that Sarvabhaum has so much affection for me and is so much concerned about my spiritual welfare."⁵

Gopinath felt that instead of soothing his feeling and trying to cure the injury caused to his tender heart by Sarvabhaum, Mahaprabhu further injured it. He said, "Prabhu! Whatever be your attitude towards Sarvabhaum, his words are still piercing my heart like an arrow. You will have to bring about change in his attitude and relieve me of my suffering. Until you do that I shall not take any food or drink."

How could Mahaprabhu bear the suffering of his devotee. He looked at him with a smile and said, "You are a devotee and Jagannath is a *kalpataru*⁵ for his devotees. He will certainly fulfill your wish. You go and take your food."

MERCY ON SARVABHAUM

Gopinath understood that Sarvabhaum was soon going to be blessed with the mercy of Mahaprabhu. He went home and took his food.

The next day when Sarvabhaum met Mahaprabhu, he took him to a secluded place. He had desired in

⁵ C.C., 2,6, 108-109.

⁵ Wish-fulfilling tree.

his capacity as the teacher of the Sannyasis to reprimand Mahaprabhu for his sentimentalism. But as soon as he saw him, his attitude changed. He became kind and humble. He said with folded hands, "Svamin, I came to know from Gopinath that you are the son of Jagannath Misra. Jagannath Misra was my friend and class-mate. Therefore I have parental affection for you. I want to say something in your own interest. Kindly forgive me for what may look like my arrogance. The Bhakti you have in you is undoubtedly very difficult to obtain. But you are a Sannyasi. The duty of a Sannyasi is to acquire *jnana*. You sing and dance like the sentimentalists, which is not good. In your young age it is difficult to control the senses. Singing and dancing, instead of taming the senses, will make them run wild. I want to set you firmly on the path of *jnana* by teaching Veda. Every day in the afternoon I shall teach you Veda."⁶

Mahaprabhu said with folded hands, "I am a fool. I do not know what is right or wrong, good or bad. Therefore I surrender to you. You may kindly do what you think is good for me."⁶

Sarvabhaum was very happy to hear this, because this was what he wanted. His pride as a teacher of Vedanta magnified to find a student like Mahaprabhu, who was revered and worshipped by all. From the next day, sitting on the *asana* of the guru, he started teaching Veda to Mahaprabhu.

⁶ C.C., 2, 6, 114.

Sarvabhaum, the very image of pride was reading the Veda, Mahaprabhu, the very image of humility was listening. Sarvabhaum wanted to impress Mahaprabhu by his learned commentary and powerful arguments. But Mahaprabhu was listening like a mute listener. He did not make any comment or gesture to indicate his approval or disapproval. Seven days passed like this. Then Sarvabhaum got exasperated. On the eighth day, while opening the book he said, "Svamin! For seven days I laboured hard to expound the Veda. But you have been silent all the time. I do not know whether you understood what I said or not."⁷

Mahaprabhu said in all humility, "Maharaj! I am a fool, you are the biggest pandit of the world. How can I understand your scholarly commentary?"

"If you do not understand, why do you not tell me? How am I to know what you understand and what you do not understand," Sarvabhaum said angrily.

Mahaprabhu said submissively yet frankly, "Maharaj! I understand the aphorisms of the Veda. Their meaning is clear. But I do not understand your commentary."

Sarvabhaum felt that the young Sannyasi had shot an arrow through the tendermost corner of his heart. What he said clearly meant that his commentary was not correct. He had never imagined even in dream that anyone could have the courage to say that to him. But

⁷ ibid 116-117.

the son of Jagannath Misra did say it. Could there be a greater cause for anguish, humiliation and irritation for him? He said with a sense of injured pride and with eye-brows raised, "I see! You also have the pride of learning—humility outside and pride within! You have the courage to teach me Veda in my old age. Very well then, you teach. I shall listen."

Mahaprabhu said with folded hands, "Maharaj! You need not take it amiss. The fault is not yours. Your explanation is correct in so far as it is based on the commentary of Shankaracharya. But the Shastras say that Sri Bhagavan had, for the fulfillment of some purpose of His own, asked Shankaracharya to conceal the real meaning of the Veda and interpret it wrongly.⁶ As ordained Shankaracharya concealed the real meaning of the Veda by adopting the Laksna Vritti⁷ of words instead of the Avidha Vritti.⁸ Therefore it is easy to understand the Veda, but not the commentary of Veda by Shankaracharya. The simple and direct meaning of the Veda is that Bhagavan is *Sachchidanand-ghana-vigraha*,⁹ the *jiva* is His part and *priti* (love) of Bhagavan is the *pancham-purushartha*,¹⁰ or the fifth and the highest End to be attained. Shankaracharya has concealed this and given an

⁶ Padma Purana, Uttara khanda, 235,28

⁷ Indirect meaning

⁸ Direct meaning.

⁹ Figure of concentrated truth, intelligence and bliss.

imaginary interpretation, according to which the *Jiva* is Brahma and the end is Mukti or emancipation.”¹⁰

Mahaprabhu proved this with the help of many quotations from the Shastras and argument. Sarvabhaum listened like one spell-bound. He began to wonder at the erudition of the young Sannyasi. His pride as a great pandit began to appear to him to be false. However he gathered courage and asked Mahaprabhu to interpret the following Sloka of Srimad Bhagavat, which he had cited in proof of his interpretation of Veda:

“*atmaramashcha munayo nirgrantha apyurukrame/
kurvantyahaituki bhaktim ithambhutaguno harir//*

(Bh. 1, 7, 10)

—Even the *jnanis*, whose ignorance is gone and who enjoy self-contentment, do the causeless *bhakti* of Bhagavan, because the attributes of Bhagavan are such that they cannot remain without being attracted.”

Mahaprabhu said, “First you explain the Sloka. Afterwards I shall explain according to my understanding.”

Sarvabhaum got another opportunity to exhibit his learning. He gave his learned commentary on the sloka, interpreting it in nine different ways. Then he looked at Mahaprabhu in the hope that he would say something in appreciation.

¹⁰ C.C., 2, 6, 123-133.

Mahaprabhu said, "Your learned commentary of the Sloka is indeed surprising. There is no one in this world, who can make such commentary. But the Sloka can be interpreted in some other ways too." After this he interpreted the Sloka in eighteen different ways. At the end he indicated how the purport of each of the interpretations was the same. Each implied that *bhakti* or *prem* was the real and the ultimate end.

Sarvabhaum had not even imagined that there could be any other interpretation besides the nine he had given. As soon as he heard the first interpretation from the mouth of Mahaprabhu, his attitude changed. He felt that each new interpretation given by him was a blow upon his pride of learning. At the end the mountain of his pride was completely blasted. His heart became pure. On the mirror of his pure heart reflected the real self of Mahaprabhu. He began to think, "Is this young Sannyasi really Bhagavan? Have I been committing an offense at his feet by posing as his teacher?" He was so overwhelmed with a sense of guilt that he was going to fall prostrate at the feet of Mahaprabhu, when Mahaprabhu showered his mercy upon him. First He appeared before him as the four-armed Vishnu, then as Krishna playing on His flute.¹¹

At the same time Sarasvati, the goddess of learning, knowing Sarvabhaum to be one, who had received the mercy of Mahaprabhu, came and sat on his tongue, and he immediately composed one hundred

¹¹ C.C., 2, 6, 183

Slokas in His praise, which he sang.¹² Mahaprabhu was pleased to hear his hymn of praise. He embraced him lovingly. The embrace made him unconscious. When his consciousness revived he began to dance and roll at the feet of Mahaprabhu, shedding tears of joy.¹²

His tears did not stop. The whole night he passed in a state of bliss, shedding tears of love. Towards the end of night he fell asleep. The sun had not yet risen, when he heard the sweet tone of some one calling him repeatedly by name. He got up, saying 'Krishna! Krishna!' As soon as he opened his eyes, he saw Mahaprabhu standing before him. Mahaprabhu extended his hand towards him and said with a smile, "Take this *mahaprasad* of Jagannath and eat."¹³

Now Sarvabhaum was respected as the leader of the Smarta Brahmins, who are bound by the rules and regulations of piety and impiety, caste and the age-old traditions of their society. It was impossible for him to eat the *prasad* without bathing and without washing his mouth. But how could he disobey Mahaprabhu? At once he took and ate the *prasad*.

One does not know what Shakti there was in the *prasad*. As soon as he ate it, he was overwhelmed with *bhav* and began to roll happily on the ground. Mahaprabhu caressed him and, raising him from the

^{12.} ibid, 186

¹² ibid, 184-186

¹³ ibid, 198-204

ground, embraced him lovingly. With the embrace a current of *bhav* and bliss began to play with him as lightening would play with the clouds. Not being able to control the *bhav*, he was about to fall on the ground. But Mahaprabhu held him with both hands and began to dance with him.

The dance proved that his heart had become pure, he had been freed from all kinds of bondage and had drunk the wine of Krishna-prem. Without drinking that wine was it possible for a solemn and sober person like him, who was revered by all like a Raja, to dance and twist. He did not know how to dance, yet he was dancing. Therefore his dance was ludicrous. But he was unmindful of it. He was dancing and the companions of Mahaprabhu, who had come with him, felt highly satisfied to see this, but they were trying to hide their laughter on seeing the grotesqueness of the dance.

What the attitude of Sarvabhaum was towards Mahaprabhu after this can be known from the hundred Slokas of his Stuti of Mahaprabhu, which is published. He knew nothing, thought of nothing and dreamt of nothing except Mahaprabhu.

CHAPTER XX

TRAVELS IN THE SOUTH

Mahaprabhu came to Nilachal in the month of Phalgun. In Vaishakh he desired to go to the South. He said to his companions, "You are all dear to me more than my self. I cannot for a moment leave your company. But I have a strong desire to go to the South in search of Dada Vishvarup. I request you kindly to let me go alone."¹ Everyone felt as if he was struck by a thunderbolt.

Nityanand said, "Is that possible? How can You go alone? You must take any two or three persons you like with you. I have travelled in the South. I know the way to all the Tirthas in the South. Let me go with you."

Mahaprabhu said, "Sripad! I cannot do anything against your will. I have to dance as you make me dance. After taking Sannyas, when I was going to Vrindavan, you took me to Shantipur. When I was coming to Nilachal, you broke my Dand. Similarly I am bound by the love of you all. I have no

¹ C. C., 2, 7, 7 - 11.

independence of my own. Jagadanand wants me to lead a luxurious life. If I do not listen to him, he stops talking with me out of anger. Mukund feels pained to see me sleeping on the floor and bathing three times during the day according to the rules of Sannyas. He does not say anything to me, but I can see how much he feels afflicted at heart. If I take anyone of you with me, it would not be possible for me to protect my Sannyas. I, therefore, request that you remain here until I return.”²

Nityanand said, “We know that you are the master of your will and will always do what you want. But if you go alone, who will carry your *kamandalu* (water-pot) and *bahirvas*, since both of your hands will always be occupied in counting beads? Who will take care of you, when you become unconscious on account of *prem*? We request, therefore, that you at least take with you Krishna Das. He is a simple-hearted Brahmin. He will only carry your *bahirvas* and *kamandalu* and will not say anything. You will be free to do what you like.”³

Mahaprabhu agreed to this. He then went with his companions to Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya. After some talks with him, he disclosed the purpose of his visit. He said, “I have decided to go to the South in search of Dada Vishvarup. I have come to seek your permission. Kindly permit.” Sarvabhaum was shocked.

² *ibid*, 7 - 31.

³ *ibid*, 33 - 40.

He fell at his feet and said with tears streaming out of his eyes. "Prabhu! I do not know how I shall bear your separation. I can bear the stroke of thunderbolt or the death of my son, but not your separation. But I know that you are self-willed. You will go to the South, if you have so decided. I only pray that you stay here for a few more days and give us your company."⁴ Mahaprabhu stayed on for four more days. Each day he dined at his place. At the end he allowed him to leave.

Mahaprabhu went to the temple of Jagannath with Sarvabhaum to ask for Jagannath's permission to leave. He made obeisance to Jagannath, praying for His permission. At that time the Pujari gave him the *prasadi* garland of Jagannath. He took the garland as His permission. Then after circumambulating the temple, he went to the sea-coast with his companions, including Sarvabhaum. Before he went further along the sea-coast towards Alalanath, Sarvabhaum said to him, "Prabhu, I have one request. On your way to the South you must meet Rai Ramanand, the governor of Vidyanagar. Though he looks like a worldly man on account of his office as governor and is Kayastha by caste, you should not, on that account, ignore him. He is the foremost Rasika in the world and deserves your company more than anyone else. I used to ridicule him before as a Vaishnav. But now by your grace I

⁴ *ibid*, 47 - 49.

have come to realize his greatness as a Rasika Bhakta.”⁵

Mahaprabhu promised to meet him. Before taking leave of Sarvabhaum he embraced him and said, “You do Krishna-*bhajan* and pray to Krishna so that I may return safely from my journey to the South.” He said this and left. Sarvabhaum fell senseless on the ground.⁶ Nityanand sent him home with his men.

Mahaprabhu arrived at Alalanath with his companions. He sang and danced before the deity Alalanath in ecstasy. The people of the village felt attracted by his golden figure and his *bhav*. They surrounded him and sang ‘Hari, Hari.’ Mahaprabhu danced in the middle and they sang round him. The dance and *kirtan* continued for a long time. Neither would Mahaprabhu stop, nor the people singing round him. With great difficulty Nityanand could stop Mahaprabhu, but the people did not want to leave. Nityanand cleverly took Mahaprabhu out for bathing, etc. When he returned he closed the door of the temple after Mahaprabhu and the companions had entered. Gopinath cooked food, offered it to Mahaprabhu and Nityanand and the rest of the companions took their *prasad*. The crowd that had gathered outside the temple, waited for their *darshan* and shouted ‘Hari, Hari’.

⁵ C. C., 2, 7, 60 - 66.

⁶ *ibid*, 69.

Mahaprabhu got the door opened and gave them *darshan*. People continued to come for *darshan*.⁷ Kaviraj Gosvami says that the *darshan* filled them with Krishna-*prem*. They danced and sang and became Vaishnavs.⁸

Mahaprabhu passed the night at Alalanath. The next morning he made obeisance⁹ to Alalanath, embraced each one of his companions and bade farewell to them.

Mahaprabhu shot forth like an arrow towards Nilachal. Krishna Das ran behind. The companions fell senseless on the ground. They remained there without food and drink that day. The next day they returned to Nilachal with a sad heart.¹⁰

Mahaprabhu went along singing:

*Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna,
Krishna, Krishna, he/
Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna,
Krishna, Krishna, hell/
Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna,
Krishna raksamam/*

⁷ *ibid*, 76 - 85.

⁸ *ibid*, 87.

⁹ In front of the temple of Alalanath the floor is paved with huge slabs of stone, about seven or eight feet long. As Mahaprabhu made obeisance on a slab, it melted and an impression was left on it of every part of his body that touched the stone. The stone is still there with the prints of his body.

¹⁰ *ibid*, 90 - 92.

*Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna,
 Krishna pahimam//
 Ram Raghav Ram Raghav Ram Raghav
 raksamam/
 Krishna Keshava Krishna Keshava Krishna
 Keshava pahimam//¹¹*

When he saw someone on the way he said ‘*bol hari, hari*’. He was immediately intoxicated with *Krishna-prem* and said ‘*Krishna Hari*.’¹² He followed Mahaprabhu, saying ‘*Krishna Hari, Krishna Hari*’. Then Mahaprabhu charged him with his Shakti by giving him a loving embrace and sent him back. He went to his village, shouting ‘*Krishna hari, Krishna Hari*’ sometimes laughing, sometimes weeping. He said to whomsoever he met, ‘Say *Krishna hari*.’ He also got intoxicated with *Krishna-prem* and sang and danced like him. Such was the effect of the Shakti with which Mahaprabhu charged the man with his embrace. The Shakti passed from one man to another and from one village to another and the whole area was thus charged with *Krishna-prem*.¹³

Krishna Das Kaviraj says that as Mahaprabhu went on his journey, he embraced hundreds of people and made them Mahabhangavatas by his mere touch. They became Acharyas and they in their turn made hundreds

¹¹ C. C., 2, 7, 94 - 96.

¹² *ibid*,

¹³ *ibid*, 94 - 101.

of others Vaishnavs. In this way the people of the whole of South India up to Setubandh were made Vaishnavs.¹⁴ The Shakti, which Mahaprabhu manifested in the South, he did not manifest even in Navadvip.¹⁵

VISIT TO KURMA-KSETRA: MERCY ON THE LEPER VASUDEV

Thus walking and distributing *Krishna-prem* on the way, Mahaprabhu reached Kurma-ksetra. The place is called Kurma-ksetra, because it has a temple of Kurma Bhagavan, the tortoise incarnation of Vishnu. Mahaprabhu sang and danced before Kurma Bhagavan. Many people came for his *darshan*. On seeing Mahaprabhu's golden figure and his *prem*, they became Vaishnavs and began to dance with their arms raised shouting 'Krishna Hari.'¹⁶

In this village there lived a *parama Bhagavat*¹⁷ Vaidic Brahaman, named Kurma. He invited Mahaprabhu for *Bhiksa*. When Mahaprabhu went to his house, he washed his feet and took his *charanamrita*. He fed him well and took his *prasad*. Then he said to Mahaprabhu, "Prabhu! I find the world too heavy. Kindly permit me to renounce it and go with you." Mahaprabhu said, "Do not say like that.

¹⁴ *ibid*, 102 - 105.

¹⁵ *ibid*, 106.

¹⁶ C. C., 2, 7, 111 - 113.

¹⁷ Devotee of the highest order.

Stay at home with your family. Always chant Harinam and ask everyone else to chant. Become a Guru at my behest and deliver the people of this village."

Mahaprabhu stayed in the village for the night. The next morning after his bath he proceeded onwards. There also lived in this village a devotee Brahamin named Vasudev. He had severe type of leprosy. Insects crawled all over his body. If an insect fell from his body, he picked and placed it over the body, so that it might not be deprived of its food.¹⁸ At night he came to know about the arrival at the house of Kurma of a Sannyasi, whose beauty and *bhav* were supernatural. Next morning he went to his house for his *darshan*. As soon as he said that the Sannyas had already left, he became unconscious. When he regained consciousness, there was no end to his weeping and wailing. Omniscient Mahaprabhu came to know. He had gone away, but he suddenly appeared before the leper and embraced him. His embrace not only made his leprosy disappear, it made his body beautiful. The leper was surprised at the causeless and limitless mercy of Mahaprabhu. He fell at his feet and began to weep. He said, "Prabhu! Even the smell of my body kept people away from me. No one ever came near me. But You embraced me. This makes me think that you are Bhagavan. No one, except Bhagavan can be so merciful. You have done me a great favour by giving *darshan*, but I do not know whether you have done

¹⁸ *ibid*, 33 - 34.

me a favour or disfavour by curing my leprosy and making my body beautiful. I was alright as a leper. No one came near me. There was no question of any kind of pride, power, name or fame assailing me. Now my fame will increase because of the sudden change that has come in my body, especially because it has come on account of your mercy. Many people will come to see me and my pride will increase.”¹⁹

Mahaprabhu said, “You need not fear. You always chant Krisna-nam and deliver others by preaching to them Krishna and Krishna-nam. Pride and its associates name and fame, etc. will keep away from you. Krishna will soon accept you.” Prabhu said this and disappeared.

Both the Brahmans, Vasudev and Kurma then threw their arms round each other and wept.²⁰

MEETING RAMANAND IN VIDYANAGAR

Mahaprabhu reached Vidyanagar on the bank of Godavari. He bathed in Godavari and sat down on the bank, thinking of Ramanand. At the same time Ramanand suddenly felt an irresistible urge to go and bathe in Godavari. He reached the bank of Godavari escorted by his royal retinue, consisting of bands’-men, horsemen and elephants, etc. After bathing he saw sitting at some distance a Sannyasi, having golden

¹⁹ *ibid*, 138 - 142.

²⁰ *ibid*, 43 - 45.

lustre on his face and a rosary in his hand. He was drawn towards him like iron drawn by magnet. He went and fell prostrate at his feet.

Mahaprabhu stood up and said, "You are Ramanand. Aren't you?"

"I am your humble servant," replied Ramanand.

Mahaprabhu immediately gave him a hearty embrace and became unconscious. Ramanand also became unconscious on account of the divine touch of his body.

After some time, when both regained consciousness, Mahaprabhu said, "By your touch I am blessed with Bhakti. I now understand why Sarvabhaum has sent me to you."

Ramanand said with folded hands, "Prabhu! Do not deceive me. You have kindly come here only to bless this poor creature, the lowliest of the lowly. Therefore kindly stay here for a few days to purify me."

Mahaprabhu said, "I have great desire to hear *Krishna-katha* from your mouth. I will certainly stay here for a few days."

At that time came a Brahmin, who invited Mahaprabhu to his house. Mahaprabhu went to his house, Ramanand returned to his.

In the evening Ramanand came to Mahaprabhu. But this time he came not in the dress and form of a governor with his entourage, but as an ordinary person of a low caste. Mahaprabhu started conversation by

saying, "Ramanand! Tell me what is the End (*Sadhyā*) of the *jīva* and how it can be attained."

Ramanand did not know what Mahaprabhu wanted him to say. He replied in the ordinary way by saying, "Prabhu! Devotion to Vishnu is the End and Varnashram Dharm is the means."

Mahaprabhu said, "This is alright. The Shastras say that if Brahmin, Ksatriya, Vaishya and Shudra perform their duty as enjoined by the Shastras Vishnu is pleased. But this is *Sakam Karma*.²¹ People perform their duty for the sake of their happiness. The extent to which Vishnu is pleased by this kind of *karma* entitles them to the pleasure of heaven (Svarga) and nothing more. This further strengthens the bond of Maya instead of cutting it. Tell me of something higher."

Ramanand said, "Higher than *Sakam-karma* is *karmarpana* to Krishna. The *jīva* does not do anything for his own happiness. He offers the fruits of whatever actions he performs to Krishna.

Mahaprabhu said, "In this kind of Sadhana the dominating factor is the desire for Mukti. Therefore the Sadhak attains Mukti, not the loving service of Krishna. The Muktas have their place in Siddha-lok, which is far below Vraj-dham, where the Lila of Krishna always goes on. Tell me of something higher still.

²¹ Action performed with some selfish end in view.

Ramanand said, "Higher than this is the way of Sadhana, in which the *jiva* instead of offering his *karmas*, offers himself to Krishna. This kind of Sadhak does not have to offer his *karmas* to Krishna, because whatever he does, he does for Krishna. He cannot do anything for himself, because he is totally surrendered to Him. This is according to the Gita Slok (Gita, 18, 60) in which Krishna advises Arjun to give up all *dharma*s or actions and surrender himself completely to Him.

Mahaprabhu described this also as something external (*vahya*), because it has only the form of Bhakti, not its essence, which lies in exclusive devotion to Krishna and intense desire for His loving service. According to the above mentioned Slok Arjun is required to give up all *karmas* as a matter of duty, Because he is so enjoined by Krishna and assured by him that if he commits any sin by giving up Karma or by not performing his duty as enjoined by the Shastras, He would protect him. This is not Bhakti in the real sense. In true Bhakti renunciation of all *karmas* is natural and automatic on account of intense and exclusive desire to serve Krishna, as in the case of Gopis, who rush towards Krishna at dead of night, with the intense desire to serve Him, not caring for morality or immorality, the injunctions of the Shastras, the pleasure or displeasure of the elders of the family and the sin they might commit by so doing.

Beyond self-surrender to Krishna Ramanand

described *jnana-misra-bhakti* (Bhakti mixed with *jnana*). Sadhan of *jnana-misra-bhakti* was also described by Mahaprabhu as lower than the Sadhan of Shuddha Bhakti or pure Bhakti, unmixed with *jnana* and *karma*. Jnana and Vairagya are useful in the primary stages of Bhakti for withdrawing the mind from all objects other than Krishna. When the mind is completely detached from those objects, they cease to be useful. On the other hand they are baneful to Bhakti, since they have the effect of drying up the Rasa of Bhakti. But *jnana*, which aims at the unification of the self with Bhagavan and the attainment of Sayujya-mukti²² is totally opposed to Bhakti, because in Sayujya Mukti loving service of Bhagavan is not possible.

In *jnana-mishra* Bhakti the role of Bhakti is to assist *jnana* in realizing Sayujya-Mukti. After Sayujya-mukti is attained it ceases to have any value.

Therefore Mahaprabhu asked Ramanand to go further than *jnana-misra-bhakti*. Then Ramanand described *jnana-shunya bhakti* or pure Bhakti. Mahaprabhu approved this, because the Sruit says "bhakti vashah purushah—Bhagavan is subjugated by Bhakti." But he said that 'Bhagavan is' not pleased so much by ordinary or Vaidhi Bhakti as by Raganuga Bhakti. In Vaidhi Bhakti the guiding factors are the injunctions of the Shastras and the fear of their transgression. In Raganuga Bhakti the guiding principle

²² Absorption in Bhagavan

is the intense longing or greed (*lobh*) for the loving service of Bhagavan. The Sadhak of Vaidhi-*bhakti* is influenced by the Aisvarya of Bhagavan. He regards Him as the bestower of Mukti. Therefore he goes to Vaikunth, where he lives, after attaining one of the four kinds of Mukti, as the Parshad or companion of Bhagavan. The Sadhak of Raganuga Bhakti is influenced by the Madhurya of Bhagavan. He regards Bhagavan as his beloved. He goes to Vraj, *the dham*, where His Madhur Lila is always going on and renders loving service to Him.

Raganuga Bhakti is of four kinds—Dasya, or love like that of a servant towards his master, Sakhya, or love like that of a friend towards friend, Vatsalya or love like that of parent towards the child, Madhur or love like that of a lady towards her beloved. Sakhya is superior to Dasya, Vatsalya to Sakhya and Madhura to Vatsalya. Krishna is not subjugated by the Bhakti of any other *bhav*. Amongst the devotees of Madhur *bhav* Krishna is not subjugated by the Bhakti of any other devotee as much as by the Bhakti of Radha. His subjugation by Radha is complete.

Therefore, as desired by Mahaprabhu, Ramanand described the Bhakti of each of these *bhavs*. When he had described the Bhakti of Radha, there was nothing more to be described. But Mahaprabhu insisted on his describing something further. Then he described the highest stage of the love between Krishna and Radha, called *premvilasa-vivarta*. In this state the intense love of Radha-Krishna for each other, resulting in their

intense desire to cause utmost happiness to each other melts, as it were, the body, mind and soul of each and unites them. But this union is not like the union of Jiva and Brahma, as advocated by the Advaitins. This is union in love, in which Radha and Krishna continue to exist separately, but they have an inconceivable experience of union, which makes them forget their separate existence. Mahaprabhu is the living image of this union. He wanted to keep this a secret. Therefore as soon as Ramanand began to describe it, he clasped his mouth with his hand, but said, "Ramanand! This is the supreme end. There is nothing beyond it."

Mahaprabhu then asked Ramanand to tell him about the means to attain the *supreme* End. Ramanand said, "The *supreme* End cannot be attained without the love of Radha. Radha's love is so deep, so pure and so subtle that the *jiva* can never directly attain it. Not to speak of the ordinary *jiva*, even the Sakhis of Vrndavan, who are non-different from Her, just as the leaves and flowers of a creeper are non-different from the creeper, cannot directly experience it. But they experience it indirectly, because as assistants in the *prem-lila* of Radha-Krishna, they are wholly surrendered to Her, and are identical with Her in *bhav*. On account of their complete identity with Her in *bhav* (*bhav-tadatmya*) they also experience what Radha experiences. The *jiva* also can experience what Radha experiences by doing *bhajan* and serving Radha-Krishna under the guidance of the Sakhis.

RAMANAND'S DARSHAN OF MAHAPRABHU AS RADHA AND KRISHNA COMBINED

The conversation between Ramanand and Mahaprabhu continued for a number of days. Ramanand went to him in the evening, passed the whole night in Krishnakatha with him and returned the next morning. He began to feel that Mahaprabhu inspired him to say many things, about which he knew nothing. The Bhakti in his heart also made him feel that Mahaprabhu Himself was Krishna, Who had appeared in this world with His body covered with the body of Radha. He did not hesitate to reveal this to Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu said, "No surprise that you feel like this, because you are a Bhakta and it is natural that you should see Krishna in everything."

Ramanand said, pretending to be angry, "Prabhu! You have shown so much mercy upon this undeserving person. Does it not ill-behave you to conceal Yourself from him?" Mahaprabhu was moved. Immediately He showed him His true form as Krishna combined with Radha.²³

On seeing Him in that form Ramanand became unconscious. Mahaprabhu brought him back to consciousness by his fondling touch.

After receiving the mercy of Mahaprabhu, Ramanand became mad with love. It became impossible for him to function as governor.

²³ C.C., 2, 8, 233

Mahaprabhu asked him to continue to function till he returned from the South and go to Nilachal after his return. He said, "At Nilachal we shall both live happily, talking always of Krishna and His Lila."

Mahaprabhu proceeded onwards on his journey after passing ten days in *Krishna-katha* with Ramanand.

MERCY ON A DEVOTEE OF RAM IN SIDDHABAT

From Vidyanagar Mahaprabhu went to Siddhabat. There he had the *darshan* of Shri Raghunath. One of the Brahamin devotees of Raghunath invited him for Bhiksa. The Brahmin chanted the name 'Ram' all the time.²⁴

Mahaprabhu stayed in Siddhabat that night. The next morning he went to Skandaksetra. From Skandaksetra he went to Trimath. From Trimath he went back to Siddhabat and again met the devotee, who chanted Ram-nam. He saw that instead of 'Ram', he was chanting 'Krishna'. Mahaprabhu had Bhiksa at his place. After Bhiksa he said to him, "You always chanted 'Ram'. How is it that you are now always chanting 'Krishna'?"

The Brahmin replied, "This is the result of your *darshan*. Since my childhood I chanted 'Ram'. I came to know from the Shastras that one Krishna-nam bore

²⁴ C. C., 2, 9, 17.

fruit equal to the fruit of three Ram-nams. Still I could not chant Krishna-nam, because Ram is my Ishta and I did not derive as much pleasure from chanting Krishna-nam as I derived from chanting Ram-nam. But when I had your *darshan* Krishna-nam once came on my tongue and remained. Ram-nam never came after that. From this I understand that you are no other than Krishna." So saying the Brahmin fell at the feet of Mahaprabhu.²⁵ Mahaprabhu blessed him and went to Vriddha Kashi.

MERCY ON THE BAUDDHA ACHARYA

From Vriddha Kashi, Mahaprabhu went to a village and began to rest there amongst the Brahmans. Attracted by his beauty and *bhav* thousands of people came for his *darshan*. Such was the influence of his *bhav-bhakti*, his golden beauty and the inexplicable charm of his personality, that whoever came for his *darshan* started chanting 'Krishna' and became Vaishnav.²⁶ This was a matter of great concern for the Mayavadis, the Smarts, the Mimamsakas and others. They came and challenged him for discussion on the Shastras. Mahaprabhu defeated them all in discussion and proved the superiority of Vaishnavism over all other forms of religion.²⁷ The proud Bauddha Acharyas there came in large numbers with their students and

²⁵ *ibid*, 2, 9, 19 - 32.

²⁶ *ibid*, 36 - 38.

²⁷ *ibid*, 36 - 38.

entered into a long discussion with him. They used all kinds of hair-splitting arguments, on which their philosophy is based, to prove the superiority of Buddhism. They were also vanquished. They felt so much chagrined that they began to think of ways and means for making him lose his caste and religion. They sent him a tray full of unclean and forbidden food as *prasad* of Vishnu to eat. A huge bird came and took away the tray.²⁸ The food fell upon the heads of the Bauddhas in the form of filth and the tray fell upon the head of the Bauddha Acharya in such a way that his head was seriously injured by its edge. He became unconscious.²⁹ The Bauddhas were frightened. They came and fell at the feet of Mahaprabhu and said, "Prabhu! We know now that You are no other than God. Kindly forgive us for our offense and be merciful to our Guru, so that his consciousness is revived." Mahaprabhu said, "You chant 'Krishna, Krishna Hari' and shout into the ears of the Guru, 'Say Krishna Hari.' His consciousness will be revived. All the Bauddhas then began to do Hari-sankritan. They shouted into the ears of the Guru, "Say "Krishna Hari". He sprang up, chanting 'Hari, Hari' and fell at the feet of Mahaprabhu. He addressed him as "Krishna" and said, "Merciful Krishna! Forgive me for my offense." After showing mercy to him, Mahaprabhu suddenly disappeared. No one could see where he had gone.³⁰

²⁸ *ibid*, 48 - 50.

²⁹ *ibid*, 48 - 50.

³⁰ *ibid*, 51 - 57.

AT SRIRANGAM

Mahaprabhu went to Tripadi, Pananrisinha, Shivakanchi, Vishnukanchi, Paksatirth, Vriddhakol and other Tirthas and then to Sriranga-ksetra on the bank of river Kaveri. After bathing in the sacred Kaveri he went to the temple of Sriranganath. He was overwhelmed with *bhav* to see Sriranganath and started dance and *kirtan* before Him. Crowds of people started pouring into the temple to have his *darshan*. Venkat Bhatt, one of the three chief priests of Sri Ranganath³¹ was watching him from a distance. He was impressed by his exquisite beauty, soul-stirring *kirtan* and extraordinary *bhav*. After his *bhav* had subsided, he requested him to have *bhiksa* at his place. Mahaprabhu agreed.

There was no end to the happiness of the Bhatt family on having Mahaprabhu in their midst. Venkat Bhatt washed Mahaprabhu's feet with the water of Kaveri and gave the *charanamrita* to each member of the family to drink. After Mahaprabhu had taken his *prasad*, Venkata Bhatt said, "Prabhu! *Chaturmasya*³² has arrived. I request that during this period you kindly stay here with us so that we may have the opportunity of hearing Krishna-katha from you and be blest." Mahaprabhu lived at his house for four months.³³

³¹ The other two chief priests were Trimalla Bhatt and Prabuddha Bhatt, both brothers of Venkata Bhatta. Trimalla was the eldest and Prabuddha the youngest of the three.

³² The four months of the rainy season.

³³ C. C., 2, 9, 86.

Every day Mahaprabhu bathed in the Kaveri and did dance and *kirtan* before Lord Ranganath. Thousands of people came from distant places for his *darshan* and were inspired to sing Harinam by merely looking at him.³⁴

MAHAPRABHU'S TEACHINGS TO VENKATA BHATT

As long as Mahaprabhu stayed with Venkata Bhatt, he enjoyed his talks on Krishna with him. He had developed friendly feeling towards him. Therefore his talks with him were sometimes serious, sometimes humorous.

Venkata Bhatt was a worshipper of Laksmi-Narayana. One day Mahaprabhu said to him humorously, "Bhatt! Your Laksmi is the devoted wife of Narayana, the Supreme Lord of Vaikunth. Still She longs the company of Krishna. Why?"³⁵

Bhatt said, "Krishna and Narayana are non-different. *Krishna-lila* and specially His *rasa-lila* are more enjoyable. Therefore, if Laksmi desires the company of Krishna, what is wrong in it? It does not in any way affect Her devotion to Her husband."

"This is true," said Mahaprabhu, "but the fact is that She practises so much *japa*, *tapa*³⁶ and fasting in order to attain Him, still she fails. The *Shastras* say

³⁴ *ibid*, 89.

³⁵ Bh. R. 1, 123 - 124.

³⁶ Austerity.

that the *Srutis* practised *tapa* and got Him, but she has not been able to get Him till this day. What is the reason for this?"

Bhatt said, "Prabhu! My mind does not work here. How can my limited understanding penetrate the unlimited depth of the ocean of *Krishna-lila*. Only his can, who has the grace of Krishna."

Mahaprabhu laughed and said, "Listen, Krishna attracts everyone by His *madhurya*. But everyone cannot attain Him. He can be attained only by those, who approach Him through *Vraj-bhav*. The people of Vraj do not regard or worship Him as God. Everyone in Vraj knows Him as the son of Nand and not as God, the Supreme Being, Who has neither beginning nor end, neither birth nor death. Therefore they regard Him as their son, husband or friend, and behave towards Him accordingly. They tie Him to *udukhala*,³⁷ ride His shoulders, eat His remnants and give Him their remnants to eat. This would not have been possible, if they regarded Him as God. *Aishvarya-jnana*³⁸ is detrimental to *madhurya-jnana*.³⁹ Therefore in order to attain Krishna it is necessary to worship Him according to the *bhav* of the Vrajvasis, which is devoid of the knowledge of His Aishvarya. It is said in the "*Nayam sukhapo*" *Shlok of Shrimad Bhagavatm* (Bh. 10 , 9 ,

³⁷ Wooden mortar used for cleaning rice by pounding it with a pestle.

³⁸ The knowledge of the Lord's lordliness.

³⁹ The knowledge of the Lord's sweetness.

16) that Krishna is easily realized by His *bhaktas*, but not so easily by the *Jnanis*, or by Brahma or Shiva or Laksmi. The Shlok means that only by *bhaktas* of Krishna, who worship Him in the *raganuga* way under the guidance (*anugatya*) of a *gopi*, can obtain Him in the way in which the *gopis* attained Him. The *Srutis* worshipped Him in *gopi-bhav* under the guidance of the *gopis*. Therefore they got the body of *gopi* and with that body participated in the *rasa* of Krishna. Krishna is a *gopa* (cowherd) by caste. Therefore He accepts only the *gopis* as His beloved, not a goddess or any other lady. Laksmi had the conceit and the body of a goddess. She tried to attain Krishna in the same body rather than in the body of a *gopi* after worshipping Him in the *raganuga* way under the guidance of a *gopi*. Therefore she could not attain Him.”

Venkata Bhatt believed that Narayana was Bhagavan Himself and His worship was the highest worship. Mahaprabhu's joke was intended to remove this misconception from his mind. Therefore He explained to him the relative position of Krishna and Narayana by saying, “Bhatt! You should not doubt in the least that Krishna is Svayam Bhagavan or Bhagavan Himself, not Narayana. Naryana is only a partial manifestation of Krishna. Therefore Sri Krishna attracts Laksmi, but Narayan cannot attract *gopis*. Even Krishna, when He assumes the four-armed figure of Narayan, cannot attract the *gopis*.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ C. C., 2, 9, 141 - 150.

"Metaphysically, however, there is no difference between Krishna and Narayan. Similarly there is no difference between Laksmi and *gopi*. Laksmi enjoys the company of Krishna through *gopi*. One and the same God assumes different forms according to the *bhav* of the *bhakta*. It is an offence to regard them as different in substance."⁴¹

Bhaktiratnakar mentions that Gopal Bhatt Gosvami, well known as one of the six famous Gosvamis of Vrindavan, was at this time about eleven years old. He used to be present always at the talks between Mahaprabhu and Venkata Bhatt.⁴² Mahaprabhu loved him very much. He also blessed him with his *darshan* as Krishna and as Nadiya-Nagar Nimai.⁴³

At the conclusion of *Chaturmasya* Mahaprabhu took leave of the Bhatt family. They bade him farewell with tears.

Some writers have questioned the authenticity of the account, given in Chaitanya Charitamrita regarding Mahaprabhu's stay for four months at the house of Venkata Bhatt and his meeting with Gopal Bhatt during his tour of the South. S. K. De says that "The account of his (Gopal Bhatt's) meeting with Chaitanya is enveloped in the uncertainty of legends."⁴⁴ Dr. D. C.

⁴¹ C. C., 2, 9, 153 - 157.

⁴² Bh. R., 1, 98.

⁴³ *ibid*, 112 - 113 , 119.

⁴⁴ *Early History of Vaishnav Faith and Movement in Bengal*, p. 96.

Sen thinks that the story has been fabricated to give importance to Gopal Bhatt.⁴⁵ But there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the account in view of the fact that it is supported by such ancient authorities as Murari Gupt⁴⁶ and Kati Karnapur.⁴⁷

THE BRAHAMIN READING GITA IN THE TEMPLE

There lived in Srirangam a Brahmin Vaishnav, who read Gita loudly at the temple every day. People laughed to hear him read Gita, because he could not read it correctly. The Brahmin did not mind whether he read it correctly or incorrectly. He read the eighteen chapters with great absorption and devotion. While reading he sometimes wept, sometimes laughed. Horripilation, tremor and the Sattvik-*bhavs* adorned his body throughout the reading.⁴⁸

Mahaprabhu said to him, "Brahamin! What meaning of the Gita fills you so much with ecstasy?"

The Brahmin replied, "I am an illiterate incompoop. I can neither read Gita correctly, nor understand its meaning. I read it, because I have been so bidden by the Guru. While reading I see Krishna seated on Arjun's chariot as the charioteer, holding the

⁴⁵ *Chaitanya and His Companions*, p. 112.

⁴⁶ *Kadacha*, 2, 15, 14 - 16.

⁴⁷ *Mahakaya*, 13 , 4.

⁴⁸ C. C., 2, 1, 85.

bridle in His hand and sermonizing Arjun. I am ecstasized to see Him. As long as I read Gita, I am filled with ecstasy. Therefore I do not want to give up reading Gita.”⁴⁹

Mahaprabhu said, “Brahamin! You are truly qualified to read Gita. What you understand is the real meaning of Gita.”⁵⁰ So saying Mahaprabhu embraced the Brahmin.

The Brahmin held the feet of Mahaprabhu and began to do his Stuti. He said, “On seeing You I am doubly filled with ecstasy. I feel that You are no other than Krishna.”

He could recognize Mahaprabhu, because his heart was purified on account of the *darshan* of Krishna while reading Gita. Mahaprabhu asked him not to divulge the secret to anyone else.⁵¹

PARAMANAND PURI

From Srirangam Mahaprabhu went to the Rishabh mountain. There he met Paramanand Puri. Mahaprabhu made obeisance to him. He stayed with him for three days and enjoyed his company and Krishna-katha with him. Puri said he would go to Nilachal and then to Gaud to bathe in the Ganga. Mahaprabhu requested him to return to Nilachal from Gaud and stay there.

⁴⁹ *ibid*, 91 - 95.

⁵⁰ *ibid*, 96.

⁵¹ *ibid*, 97 - 99.

He said, "I shall also return soon to Nilachal after going to Setubandh. I have a great desire to live in your company."⁵²

SECRET TALKS WITH SHIVA AND DURGA

Mahaprabhu then went to Srishail, where lived Shiva and Druga in the guise of a Brahmin couple. They were happy to see Mahaprabhu. On their invitation Mahaprabhu stayed for three days with them. He had Krishna-katha and secret talks with them.⁵³ Then he went to Kamakoshthi and from Kamakoshthi to Daksin Mathura (Madura).

RAM-BHAKTA GRIEVING FOR THE ABDUCTION OF SITA

In Daksin Mathura Mahaprabhu met a Brahmin, who was a great devotee of Ram. He invited Mahaprabhu for Bhiksa, but did not cook for a long time. At noon Mahaprabhu said to him, "How is it that you have not yet started cooking?" The Brahmin replied, "Prabhu! I live here in the forest. Provisions for cooking are not available in the forest. Laksaman has gone to bring whatever fruits and vegetables are available here. When he returns Ma Sita will cook."⁵⁴ Mahaprabhu

⁵² *ibid*, 151 - 157.

⁵³ *ibid*, 160 - 161.

⁵⁴ *ibid*, 166 - 168.

understood that the Brahmin practised Manasi-seva⁵⁵ and lived in a world of his own. He was happy to know this. In the afternoon, when Laksman returned, he cooked, imagining that Sita was cooking and he was assisting Her in cooking. After the food was cooked, he offered it to Mahaprabhu, but did not eat himself. Mahaprabhu said, "Brahamin! Why don't you eat? What ails you?" The Brahamin replied, "Prabhu! I hear that Ma Sita has been abducted by Ravan. My body always burns on account of this grief, but death does not come. I do not know what to do. Since life has now no meaning to me, I shall either consign myself to the flames or drown."⁵⁶ Mahaprabhu said, "Brahamin! You grieve for nothing. You are pandit. You should know that Sita is the Shakti of Bhagavan. She has a transcendental body. She can neither be seen by physical eyes, nor touched. There can be no question of Her being carried away by Ravan. Sita disappeared on the arrival of Ravan, and in Her place appeared Maya-Sita,⁵⁷ who was carried away by Ravan.⁵⁸ The Brahamin believed what Mahaprabhu said. He felt greatly relieved and gave up his fast.

Mahaprabhu then went to Duraveshan, where he

⁵⁵ In this kind of Upasana the devotee imagines himself to live in close proximity of his Ishta, in the transcendental region and renders loving service to Him.

⁵⁶ C. C., 2, 9, 72 - 74.

⁵⁷ Illusory prototype of Sita.

⁵⁸ *ibid*, 175 - 178.

had the *darshan* of Raghunath and to Mahendra hill, where he had the *darshan* of Parashuram. Then he reached Setubandh and had the *darshan* of Rameshvar. At Setubandh he attended a meeting of the Brahmans in which the *path* (reading) of Kurma Purana was going on. He heard the *path* relating to the abduction of Sita, in which it was said that when Ravan came to abduct Sita, Agnideva took her away and kept in Her place Maya Sita, whom Ravan carried away. When Ram killed Ravan and Sita was put to *Agni-pariksa* (fire test), the Maya Sita entered the fire and Agnideva brought and gave the real Sita to Ram.⁵⁹

Mahaprabhu was pleased to hear this. He took from the pandit reading the Purana the particular page of the book, relating to the episode and copied it. He gave the copy to the pandit and kept the original with him. Then he went back to Daksin Mathura and gave that page to the Ram-bhakta.⁶⁰

The Ram-bhakta was delighted to read it. He fell at the feet of Mahaprabhu, wept and said, "Prabhu! You are no other than Sri Raghunandan, in the guise of Sannyasi. You kindly came to give me *darshan* and relieved me of my grief and anxiety. That day, on account of my anxiety, I could not feed You well. Now that You have mercifully come again, kindly bless me by taking *bhiksa* at my house again." Mahaprabhu agreed. The Ram-bhakta carefully cooked the choicest

⁵⁹ *ibid*, 188 - 191.

⁶⁰ *ibid*, 193 - 195.

menu that day and fed Mahaprabhu to his heart's content.

DELIVERANCE OF KRISHNA DAS FROM BHATTAMARIS

Mahaprabhu then went to Pandyadesh, Nayatripadi, Chidayatala, Tilakanchi, Gajendramoksada-Tirth, Panagoli-tirth, Chamatapur, Malaya-paravat, Kanyakumari and Amalitala. From there he went to Mallaradesh, where lived the Bhattamaris, a class of Bamachari Sannyasis, who kept women with them and lived in opulence.

In Mallaradesh one night, when Mahaprabhu was asleep, the Bhattamaris seduced simple Krishna Das by tempting him with the offer of women and wealth and took him away. Next morning the omniscient Mahaprabhu came to know that Krishna Das was carried away by the Bhattamaris. He went to their Ashram and said to them, "Look, you are Sannyasis. I am also a Sannyasi. You should not do anything to put me into trouble. You have brought my attendant Krishna Das. You should return him to me." Why should they listen. They fell upon him with weapons. Prabhu's Shakti Yogamaya made the weapons turn upon them. They cried aloud and ran helter skelter for their life. In the confusion that followed Mahaprabhu pulled Krishnadas out and carried him.⁶¹

⁶¹ *ibid*, 209 - 216.

Kavikarnapur says that Krishnadas was Lavang, the Sakha (friend) of Krishna in Vraj-lila. It was not possible for a Nitya-siddha Bhagavat-Prashad like him to fall a prey to Maya in the shape of women and wealth. It was for *jiva-shiksa* (teaching to the *jivas*) that Lila-shakti of Krishna engendered in him temporarily a *bhav* of attraction towards women and wealth.⁶² The Shiksa meant for the *jivas* was that it was very difficult for the ordinary *jivas* to get over the temptation of women and wealth. Therefore they must keep away from the Sampradayas that have anything to do with women and wealth. If by chance a *jiva* falls into their clutches, there is no hope for his deliverance, unless Krishna comes to his help. In case, however, this happens in the case of a devotee, who is sincerely surrendered to Krishna, Krishna is bound to come to his help. The deliverance of Krishnadas from the clutches of the Bhattamaris is an instance of Krishna's limitless mercy towards His devotees.

BRAMHA-SAMHITA

From Mallardesh Mahaprabhu went to the coast of river Payasvani. He bathed in the river and went to the temple of Adikesav. He was overwhelmed with *bhav* to see Adikesav. He sang and danced before Him for a long time. It was during a meeting with the devotees there that he was shown *Brahma-samhita*,

⁶² *Gauraganoddesha-dipika*, 132.

the crest-jewel of the philosophical treatises relating to Sri Krishna. There is no other Vaishnav Shastra that glorifies Sri Krishna so well. It is succinct, yet pregnant with meaning. In a few words it says a lot about Krishna and His absoluteness. On seeing the book Mahaprabhu was filled with ecstasy. Tears, tremor, horripilation, stupor and the other Sattvik-*bhavs* appeared on his body.⁶³ He had the book copied and carried the copy with him as one of the most precious treasures of his life.⁶⁴

ASHRAM OF MADHVACHARYA IN UDUPI: DISCUSSION WITH TATTVAVADIS

Mahaprabhu then went to Ananta-padmanabh, Janardan, Paysni, Sinhari Math, Matsya-tirth and Udupi, the place of Madhvacharya. In Udupi he was overwhelmed with *bhav* to have the *darshan* of Nritya-Gopal, the Image of Gopal in dancing pose. The Image was installed by Madhvacharya after it had appeared to him in a dream.⁶⁵ The story goes that a trader from Dvarka was going somewhere by boat. There was a heap of Gopi-chandan in the boat and Gopal was inside the heap. When the boat reached Udupi, it drowned. Then Gopal appeared to Madhvacharya in a dream and said, "I am inside water on a boat laden with Gopi-

⁶³ C. C., 2, 9, 221.

⁶⁴ *ibid*, 220 - 223.

⁶⁵ *ibid*, 229.

chandan that has drowned. You take me out." Madhvacharya took him out and installed him in a temple, in which it is worshipped even now.

Mahaprabhu sang and danced before Nritya-Gopal for a long time. The Tattvavadis, as the followers of Madhvacharya were called, did not at first talk with him, because he looked like a Shankarite from his dress and they were strong opponents of Shankar and his Mayavad. But when they saw him dancing in ecstasy before Nritya-Gopal, they felt very much attracted towards him and started talking with him.⁶⁶

The Tattvavadis were well-versed in the Shastra. They were proud of their knowledge and the philosophy of their Sampradaya, which they regarded as the highest. With a view to humble their pride Mahaprabhu asked them to state what they thought was the ultimate End (*Sadhya*) and what was the means (*Sadhan*) to attain the End.

The Tattvavadi Acharya said, "The End is Mukti, that is, freedom from bondage and living in Vaikunth. The means to attain the End is Varnashram-dharm and *karmarpana* to Krishna, that is performance of *karma* for Krishna. This is how the Shastras describe *Sadhya* and *Sadhan*."

Mahaprabhu said, "The Shastras describe *Sravana-kirtan* as the means and *Krishna-prem* and the loving service of Krishna as *Pancham Purushartha* or the

⁶⁶ C. C., 2, 9, 233 - 234.

highest End.”⁶⁷ In this connection he cited the *Bhagavat* Shloks 7, 5, 23 - 24 and 11, 2, 40. He said that *Krishna-prem* could never be attained by *karma* and that all the Shastras denounced *karma*.⁶⁸ In this connection he cited the *Bhagavat* Shloks 11, 11, 32 and 11, 20, 9 and the *Gita* Shlok 18, 66. As regards Mukti he said that the Bhaktas denounced all the five kinds of Mukti.⁶⁹ He cited in this connection the *Bhagavat* Shloks 6, 29, 13; 5, 14, 44; and 6, 17, 28. Further he said, “Both Karmi and Jnani are devoid of Bhakti. I find that your Sampradaya is vitiated by both *karma* and *jnana*.⁷⁰ There is, however, one good thing in your Sampradaya and that is your faith in the reality of the Sri Vidgraha of Bhagavan.”⁷¹

The Tattvavadi Acharya was surprised and humbled. Some Gaudiya Vaishnav Acharyas refuse to recognize any relationship between the Chaitanya Sampradaya and Madhva Sampradaya on the grounds that Mahaprabhu himself pointed out fundamental difference between his views regarding *Sadhyā* and *Sadhanā* and those of Madhvacharya. But it cannot be denied that Mahaprabhu did not start a new Sampradaya. It cannot also be denied that he took initiation from Ishvar Puri, a devotee of the Madhva

⁶⁷ *ibid*, 240 - 241.

⁶⁸ *ibid*, 242.

⁶⁹ *ibid*, 243.

⁷⁰ *ibid*, 249.

⁷¹ *ibid*, 250.

Sampradaya. Therefore inspite of the philosophical differences between the Chaitanya Sampradaya and Madhva Sampradaya, a link between them, so far as disciplic succession is concerned, cannot be denied.⁷²

KRISHNAKARNAMRITA

From Udupi Mahaprabhu went to Phalgu-tirth, Panchapsara-tirth, and Pandupur. In Pandupur he sang and danced before Vitthal Thakur. Also he met there Sriranga Puri, a disciple of Sri Madhavendra Puri. The attraction of his company made him stay in Pandupur for about a week. During this period he happily passed day and night in sweet *Krishna-katha* with him.⁷³ From Pandupur Mahaprabhu went to the coast of river Krishna-venva, where he heard some Vaishnavs reading *Krishna-karnamrita*. Krishna Das Kaviraj says that there is no book that equals *Krishna-karnamrita* in describing the beauty of Sri Krishna and the sweetness of His Lila. If anyone wants to know what real *Krishna-prem* means, he should read this book.⁷⁴ Mahaprabhu was extremely delighted to hear the reading of this book. He had it copied and carried it along with *Brahmasamhita* as the two most valuable jewels he had found during his tour of the South.⁷⁵

⁷² The subject has been discussed in detail in the author's *The Philosophy and religion of Sri Chaitanya*, Chap III.

⁷³ C.C., 2, 9, 258 - 265.

⁷⁴ *ibid*, 279 - 280.

⁷⁵ *ibid*, 281.

DELIVERANCE OF SAPTATAL

From the coast of Krishnavenva Mahaprabhu went to the coast of river Narmada and from there to the Dandak forest. There he saw seven Tal (palm) trees called Saptatal. The trees were very old, very thick and very tall. Mahaprabhu embraced them. Krishna Das Kaviraj says that as soon as he embraced them, they bodily went to Vaikunth. The people were surprised to see the empty space without them. They said, "This Sannyasi must be an incarnation of Ram. Who else can have the Shakti to send the trees bodily to Vaikunth?"⁷⁶

This episode is also mentioned by Murari Gupt⁷⁷ and Kavikarnapur.⁷⁸ Murari Gupt says that the trees were under the spell of a Muni's curse, from which they were delivered by Mahaprabhu.

From the Dandak forest Mahaprabhu went to Pampa-sarovar, where he bathed, and to Panchavati, where he rested for some time. Then, travelling through Nasik, Brahmagiri and Kushavarta, the source of river Godavari, he returned to Vidyanagar, the place, where he had met Ramanand.

As soon as Ramanand heard about his arrival, he went running and made obeisance to him. Mahaprabhu lifted and embraced him. Both bathed each other in

⁷⁶ *ibid*, 284-287.

⁷⁷ *Kadacha*, 3, 16, 1 - 2.

⁷⁸ *Mahakavya*, 13, 17 - 19.

tears of love. After they had composed themselves, they started *Krishna-katha*. Mahaprabhu also told Ramanand all about his travels in the South. Then he gave him *Brahma-samhita* and *Krishna-karnamrita* and said, "These books bear witness to all that you told me about *Sadhyā* and *Sadhan* last time."⁷⁹ Ramandand was happy to see those books. He had them copied for himself and enjoyed reading and relishing them with Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu stayed in Vidyanagar for five or seven days, enjoying day and night *Krishna-katha* with Ramanand. Ramanand said to Mahaprabhu, "After you had gone I wrote to the Maharaja, asking for his permission to go to Nilachal on your return and live there to serve you. He was good enough to accord permission. I have since then been preparing to shift to Nilachal."

Mahaprabhu said, "I have in fact come here to take you to Nilachal with me."

Ramanand said, "Prabhu! You would not enjoy going with me, because with me will go elephants, horses, troops and the other retinue. You go ahead. I shall come ten days later after settling everything here."

Mahaprabhu then started alone. On reaching Alalanath, he sent Krishna Das to Nilachal to call Nityanand and his other companions. There was no limit to the happiness of Nityanand and others, when they learnt about Prabhu's arrival. They all went to

⁷⁹ *ibid*, 295 - 296.

Alalanath. Mahaprabhu embraced each one of them. They shed tears of joy and love as he embraced them. They brought Mahaprabhu to Nilachal. Mahaprabhu went straight to the temple of Jagannath. He could not control his *bhav* on having His *darshan* after a long period of separation. He sang and danced happily before Him. The Sattvik-*bhavs* adorned his body all the time. Sarvabhaum took him to his house for *bhiksa*. After *bhiksa* he lay down to rest. Sarvabhaum massaged his feet.

That day Mahaprabhu lived with his companions at the house of Sarvabhaum. He passed the whole night in conversation with them. While describing to them the experiences of his journey in the South, he said, "I went to so many Tirthas. No where I found devotees like you, except at Vidyanagar, where Ramanand gave immense pleasure to me."⁸⁰

⁸⁰ *ibid*, 328 - 329.

CHAPTER XXI

BACK TO NILACHAL: ARRIVAL OF THE DEVOTEES FROM GAUD

Once when Mahaprabhu had gone to the South, Patraparudra called Sarvabhaum and said, "Sarvabhaum! I hear that a great saint came to your house from Gaud and showered his mercy upon you."

"Maharaj! What you have heard is true."

"Why did you not tell me about him. I would also like to have his *darshan*."

"Maharaj! He is a Sannyasi and he follows the rules of Sannyas rigorously. He cannot think of meeting a Raja even in dream. You need not, however, worry about his *darshan*. I shall somehow make it possible. But just now he is not here. He is gone to the South."¹

"Why did he go away? Why did you not entreat him to live here always in the proximity of Lord Jagannath?"

"I did, but I could not prevent him from going. How could I? He is not an ordinary saint. He is Krishna Himself in the guise of a Sannyasi. Krishna

¹ C.C., 2,10, 2 - 8.

is the master of His will. He does what He likes. Who can prevent Him?"

"What do you say Sarvabhaum? He is Krishna! Can I believe? But since a wise and learned man like you, who is unequalled in his knowledge of the Shastra, who is the foremost follower and exponent in India of the Advaitic philosophy of Shankar and who till yesterday regarded the personal form of Brahman as illusion, says that He is Krishna, how can I disbelieve? This increases my anxiety for His *darshan*."²

"Maharaj! Have patience. You will have his *darshan*. He will soon return from the South. You have to arrange for a suitable place for him to live. It should be somewhere in seclusion, but not very far from Jagannath."

"I shall arrange for his stay in the house of Kashi Mishra. It is near the temple of Jagannath, yet away from the din and noise of the city."³

Sarvabhaum said to Kashi Mishra, "Kashi Mishra, you are lucky. The Maharaja has ordered that when Mahaprabhu returns from the South, he will live in your house." There was no limit to the happiness of Kashi Mishra to hear this.

Kashi Mishra began to wait most eagerly and impatiently for the arrival of Mahaprabhu. The

² ibid, 13 - 15.

³ ibid, 19.

Maharaja and all the people of Nilachal also began to wait ardently for his arrival and *darshan*. Mahaprabhu's stay in Nilachal was short, when he first arrived there from Gaud. Only the fortunate few came to know about his real personality. But it was after he had gone to the South and the people had come to know about his mercy on Sarvabhaum, that they began to recognize him as non-different from Lord Jagannath. Therefore their anxiety for his *darshan* was natural.

MEETING THE DEVOTEES OF NILACHAL

When their anxiety reached the limit, Mahaprabhu arrived. Sarvabhaum one day brought him to the house of Kashi Mishra. Kashi Mishra fell prostrate at his feet and offered to him along with his house, his heart and soul and everything else. Mahaprabhu embraced him lovingly and showed him his four-armed Vishnu form.⁴

Mahaprabhu was pleased to see the house of Kashi Mishra. He sat down there with his companions. Sarvabhaum began to introduce to him the devotees of Nilachal—Janardan, Krishna Das and Pradyumna Mishra, the Pujaris of Jagannath, Shikhi Mahiti, the 'writer' of Jagannath, Murari Mahiti, the brother of Shikhi Mahiti, Chandaneshvar, Sinheshvar, Maharaj Mahapatra, Parmanand Mahapatra and other devotees. Mahaprabhu blessed them all with a loving embrace.

⁴ ibid, 31.

Then came Bhavanand Raya with his four sons and fell at Mahaprabhu's feet. Sarvabhaum introduced him as Bhavanand, whose eldest son was Ramanand Raya and who was a great devotee. Mahaprabhu said, "His greatness is evident from the mere fact that he is the father of a son like Ramanand." Then turning to Bhavanand he said, "You are no other than Pandu. Your wife is Kunti and your five sons are the five Pandavas." Bhavanand said, "I surrender to you myself and my five sons and everything that belongs to me. My son Baninath will always remain with you. Treat him as your servant. Do not hesitate to ask him to do anything you want."⁵

Mahaprabhu embraced Bhavanand and blessed his sons by placing his lotus feet upon their head. He then sent them home, keeping only Baninath with him.⁶

ARRIVAL OF OTHER DEVOTEES

Nityanand sent Kala Krishna Das to Navadvip to inform Ma Shachi and the devotees about the arrival of Mahaprabhu from the South. Ma's anxiety was over and there was no end to her happiness, when she got the news. After giving the information to Ma. Krishnadas went to Advaitcharya, who could not contain his happiness on hearing about the safe arrival of Mahaprabhu. He roared aloud in *bhav* and started

⁵ ibid, 47 - 55.

⁶ ibid, 58 - 59.

singing and dancing. The news soon spread all over Navadvip and Gaud. There were great rejoicings everywhere. The devotees assembled at the house of Advaitcharya and began to make arrangements for their visit to Nilachal.

Paramanand Puri, who had now arrived in Navadvip, started immediately for Nilachal with Dvij Kamalakant, a devotee of Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu was happy to meet him. He made obeisance to him and said, "I hope you would kindly live permanently in Nilachal and give me your company. I desire very much to live in your company and be blessed." Paramanand Puri said, "Your company is so dear to me that I started immediately for Nilachal on hearing about your arrival, without waiting for Advaitcharya and the other devotees, who were all planning to come together." Mahaprabhu arranged for his stay in a room in Kashi Mishra's house and assigned a devotee to serve him.⁷

Shortly after came Svarup Damodar, a great Rasik whom Krishna Das Kaviraj regarded as 'the very ocean of the Rasa, in which Mahaprabhu was always drowned' and called the second manifestation (*dvitiya svarup*) of Mahaprabhu Himself.⁸ His earlier name was Purushottam Acharya. He lived in Navadvip and secretly served Mahaprabhu. When Mahaprabhu took Sannyas, he also went to Varanasi and took Sannyas

⁷ ibid, 99.

⁸ ibid, 100, 109.

from a Sannyasi named Chaitanyanand and was named 'Svarup.' After Mahaprabhu returned to Nilachal from the South, he also obtained the permission of the guru to go to Nilachal. He went there and fell at the feet of Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu lifted and embraced him. Both bathed each other in tears of love and became unconscious. When consciousness returned Mahaprabhu said to Svarup, "I came to know from a dream this morning that you would come. Now you have come. You have done well. I was blind without you. Now I have got both of my eyes."⁹

By 'both of my eyes' Mahaprabhu meant Svarup and Ramanad, in whose company he lived in Nilachal during the last twelve years of his life and relished Radha-rasa, which was the main purpose of his life.

Svarup said, "Prabhu! Kindly forgive me. I do not have the least Bhakti towards you. That is why I left your company and went to Varanasi. Though I left you, you did not leave me. You pulled me near you by the rope of your mercy."¹⁰

Mahaprabhu embraced him again and said, "Krishna is merciful. He has brought you." He kept Svarup in a sequestered place near him. Since then fell upon Svarup the heavy responsibility of looking after the physical and spiritual well-being of Mahaprabhu. He was competent in every respect to

⁹ ibid, 119.

¹⁰ ibid, 122.

shoulder this responsibility. He was like Vrihaspati so far as his knowledge of the Shastras was concerned and like Gandharva so far as his proficiency in music was concerned. He served Mahaprabhu by singing to him the songs of Vidyapati, Chandidas and Gita-govind.¹¹ If anyone else wanted to sing some song or read some Slok or book to Mahaprabhu, he could not do so unless it was first approved by him. He did not approve, if he found anything in it that was repugnant to Bhakti or the *bhav* of Mahaprabhu.¹²

Another day, when Mahaprabhu was engaged in Krishna-katha with Sarvabhaum and the other devotees, Govind came and fell at the feet of Mahaprabhu. He said, "Prabhu! I was the servant of Gosain Ishvar Puri. I have come to you, because at the time of his disappearance he asked me to live near you and serve you."¹³

Mahaprabhu said, "Purishvar¹⁴ has sent you to me out of his parental affection for me."

Sarvabhaum asked, "Prabhu! Why did Puri Gosain keep a *shudra*¹⁵ as his servant?"

Mahaprabhu replied, "Ishvar's mercy is free. It is not governed by the rules and regulations of the Vedas.

¹¹ ibid, 113.

¹² ibid, 110 - 112.

¹³ ibid, 28, 30.

¹⁴ Guru is regarded as non-different from Ishvar. therefore Mahaprabhu called Puri as 'Purishvar.'

¹⁵ A man of the fourth caste.

It is governed only by love. It does not recognize caste or family, it recognizes only love. An example of this is that Krishna dined happily at the house of Vidur." So saying he embraced Govind.¹⁶ Then he said to Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya, "Bhattacharya! I am in a dilemma. Guru's servant should be revered. I cannot accept him as my servant. I cannot also disregard the wishes or the order of the guru? Tell me what I should do."

Bhattacharya said, "Guru's order must be obeyed."¹⁷

Mahaprabhu accepted Govind as his servant. Everyone respected Govind as Mahaprabhu's favourite servant. Govind pleased everyone by his conduct.

One day Mukund came and said to Mahaprabhu, "Brahmanand Bharati has come for your *darshan*. If you permit I may bring him here."

Mahaprabhu said, "He is equal to my guru. I shall myself go to him." He went along with the devotees. But he was pained to see Brahmanand wearing the garment of deer-skin. Therefore he pretended not to see him and said to Mukund, "Where is Bharati Gosain?" Mukund said, "He stands before you."

"You do not know. Why will Bharati Gosain wear deer-skin?" Bharati understood . He said to himself, "It is true that I wear deer-skin, because it tickles my

¹⁶ C. C., 2, 10, 134 - 136.

¹⁷ ibid, 139 - 141.

vanity. Instead of bringing about deliverance, it strengthens the bond of Maya. I shall wear it no more.”¹⁸ Mahaprabhu understood his mind. He asked someone to bring a *bahirvas*. Bharati threw away the deer-skin and wore *bahirvas*. Mahaprabhu then made obeisance to him.¹⁹

Bharati said to Mahaprabhu, “Bhagavan is the Shiksa-guru of the *jivas*. You have therefore given me Shiksa and made me give up the deer-skin, a sign of vanity. There are now two Brahmans in Nilachal. Jagannath is Achal-Brahman (Brahman, Who does not move), you are Chal-Brahman (Brahman, Who moves). I find that on seeing you a great change has come upon me. Throughout my life I meditated on formless Brahman. But now I see that the form of Krishna is present before my mind and the name of Krishna is on my tongue and I see Krishna in you.”²⁰

Mahaprabhu said, “You have intense love for Krishna. Therefore you see everyone as Krishna.” He took Bharati in and gave him a place to live near him.

Then came Kashishvar Gosain, Rambhadra Acharya and Bhagavan Acharya. Mahaprabhu received them respectfully and kept them near him. Similarly many other devotees came from different places drawn by the attraction of His Divine Personality. He was to them a bottomless ocean of love, and they were drawn

¹⁸ ibid, 154 - 155.

¹⁹ ibid, 156.

²⁰ ibid, 157 - 159; 169 - 170.

towards him as the rivers and rivulets are naturally drawn to the sea.

One day Sarvabhaum said to Mahaprabhu, "Prabhu! I want to make a request, but I fear."

Mahaprabhu said, "You need not fear. I shall grant your request, if it is worth granting, otherwise not."

Sarvabhaum said, "Maharaja Prataparudra is very eager to have your *darshan*."

"Narayan, Narayan! Sannyasi meeting a Raja! Is that not like eating poison?"

"What you say is true. But the Raja is a servant of Jagannath and a great devotee."

"Even then he is a Raja. The touch of a woman poisons one's mind, even if she is made of wood. Similarly meeting with a Raja, may poison the mind of a Sannyasi, even if the Raja be a devotee. Do not talk about this again. If you do, you will not see me here in Nilachal."²¹

At this time Maharaja Prataparudra came to Nilachal with Raya Ramanand. Ramanand went straight to Mahaprabhu and made obeisance to him. He lifted and embraced him. Both bathed each other with tears of love and lost outward consciousness. The devotees were surprised to see Mahaprabhu's behaviour towards Ramanand.

Raya said to Mahaprabhu, "I spoke to the Raja about my desire to renounce worldly life and live

²¹ C. C., 2, 11, 5 - 9.

always under the shadow of your feet and serve you. The Raja sprang up with joy to hear your name. He said, 'I am very happy to know this. I am unfortunate. I cannot even have his *darshan*. You serve him with all your heart and soul. You will continue to get your full salary, even though you will serve me no more.' I was surprised to see how much he loves you and how earnestly he desires to meet you. I do not have even a particle of the devotion he has for you."²²

Mahaprabhu said, "You are one of the foremost devotees of Krishna. Because he loves you, Krishna will certainly show mercy on him."²³

The Raja called Sarvabhaum and asked him whether he had requested Mahaprabhu to give him *darshan*. Sarvabhaum said, "He is adamant in his resolve not to give you *darshan*. If I request him again, he will leave Nilachal."

The Raja was very much grieved to hear this. He said, "He is all merciful. He has been merciful to even the sinners like Jagai and Madhai. But it seems that He has come with the resolve to show mercy on all except me. If he has resolved not to give *darshan* to me, I also resolve to end my life, if I do not get his *darshan*. What is the use of life, kingdom and all else, if I do not have His mercy."²⁴

Sarvabhaum said, "You need not grieve so much.

²² ibid, 14 - 21.

²³ ibid, 22 - 23.

²⁴ ibid, 35 - 39. .

I am confident that Prabhu will show mercy on you, because he is bound by the love of his devotees and you love him so intensely. I suggest one device for winning his favour. On the Rathayatra day Mahaprabhu dances before the Rath and is overwhelmed with *bhav*. When the Rath reaches Balagandi, it stops there for sometime for the *bhog* of Jagannath. At that time Prabhu goes with the devotees to the nearby garden for rest. Even at that time he is lost in *bhav* and has no outward consciousness. At that time you go there in the guise of an ordinary Vaishnav reciting the Shlokas of Rasa-lila from Srimad Bhagavat and hold his feet. He will be happy to hear the Shlokas and embrace you, taking you to be a Vaishnav. Ramanand has already turned his mind favourably towards you by telling him about your devotion towards him.” Prataparudra decided to do likewise.²⁵

After the Snana-yatra (bath ceremony) of Jagannath came the Lord’s period of rest. At this time, according to the age-old custom the doors of the temple were closed for a fortnight. It was too much for Mahaprabhu to stay in Nilachal without the *darshan* of the Lord of Nilachal. Therefore he went to Alalanath.

ARRIVAL OF THE DEVOTEES FROM GAUD

Later Sarvabhaum and the other devotees went to

²⁵ ibid, 44 - 49.

Alalanath to inform him that the devotees from Gaud were about to arrive in Nilachal. Mahaprabhu came back to Nilachal. Sarvabhaum went to Raja Prataparudra to inform him about the arrival of Mahaprabhu in Nilachal. At the same time Gopinath Acharya also reached there. He said to the Raja, "Two hundred devotees of Mahaprabhu have arrived from Gaud. They are all Maha-bhagavats. They are now at Narendra-sarovar. Arrangements have to be made for their board and lodging. The Raja promised to make suitable arrangements for all.

He then went to the roof of the palace with Sarvabhaum and Gopinath to have a look at the devotees from Gaud. He saw that Mahaprabhu had sent Svarup and Govind to welcome the devotees by garlanding them. As Svarup garlanded them one by one, Gopinath gave to the Raja a brief description of each. The Raja said, "I am surprised to see a divine lustre on the face of each. I never saw an assembly of such devotees before. I also never saw or heard about such *prem*, and such dance and *kirtan*."²⁶

Raja saw that the devotees from Gaud started going directly to Kashi Mishra's house to meet Mahaprabhu instead of going first to the temple of Jagannath. He said to Sarvabhaum, "How is it that they are going to Mahaprabhu without first seeing Jagannath?"

²⁶ ibid, 83 - 85.

Sarvabhaum said, "This is natural. They are naturally drawn to Mahaprabhu by their love for him. They will go to the temple of Jagannath with him. He will lead them to Jagannath and they will follow."

"I see Baninath and five or seven others carrying huge quantity of *prasad*. Obviously it is meant for the devotees from Gaud. I wonder why the devotees are going to be fed just now. The Shastras say that when you go to a Tirtha (holy place of pilgrimage) you should on the first day shave and fast. They are neither shaving nor fasting."

Sarvabhaum said, "What the Shastras say is the indirect injunction of the Lord; what Mahaprabhu says is His direct injunction. The devotees are going to be fed at the instance of Mahaprabhu. Shaving and fasting are the rules of ritualistic or injunctory Bhakti. Ragmarg or spontaneous Bhakti, based on love, does not recognize the rules and regulations of ritualistic Bhakti."²⁷

The Raja came down from the roof. Sarvabhaum and Gopinath went to see the grand spectacle of the meeting between Mahaprabhu and his dear devotees from Gaud. The Raja called Kashi Misra and asked him to make proper arrangements for the board and lodging of the devotees from Gaud.

The devotees were still at some distance from the house of Kashi Misra, when Mahaprabhu came out

²⁷ ibid, 97 - 100.

with some devotees to receive them on the way. He embraced each one of them. Then he took them in. The place where he lived in the house of Kashi Misra was small. It was not possible for all the devotees to sit there. But Mahaprabhu made them all sit near him. Krishna Das Kaviraj says that the place expanded so as to accommodate them all.²⁸ Because Mahaprabhu wanted that his dear devotees should all sit near him, the place had to expand.²⁹

Mahaprabhu with his own hands garlanded each one of the devotees and applied sandalpaste on his forehead. He talked lovingly with Advaitcharya, Srivas, Gadadhar, Shuklambar, Vasudev and the other devotees. He looked round for Haridas, but could not find him. He sent some devotees to search him out. The devotees went and saw that he was lying somewhere on the road-side. They said to him, "Prabhu has sent for you. Go at once." He said, "I am low and untouchable. I cannot go to Mahaprabhu. He stays near the temple. If I go, I may touch the servants of Jagannath and make them unfit for the service of Jagannath. If I get a place, where there would be no possibility of touching the servants of Jagannath, I would like to live and pass my days there in seclusion."³⁰ The

²⁸ C. C., 2, 11, 117.

²⁹ When the Lord comes down on Earth his *dham* comes with Him. It goes wherever He goes. It is *vibhu* (infinite) though it looks small. It has the inconceivable power of contracting or expanding infinitely.

³⁰ ibid, 150 - 152.

devotees went and told this to Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu was happy to hear it.

In the meantime came Kashi Misra to inform Mahaprabhu that arrangements had been made for the board and lodging of the devotees. Mahaprabhu asked Gopinath to take them to the place, where arrangements had been made for their lodging. He asked the devotees to go there with Gopinath, bathe in the sea, have the *darshan* of the *Chuda* (crest) of the temple of Jagannath and return to him for their *prasad*.

Mahaprabhu then went to Haridas. Haridas was doing Nam-sankirtan. He fell at Mahaprabhu's feet as soon as he saw him. Mahaprabhu lifted and embraced him. Haridas said, "Prabhu! Do not touch me. I am low and untouchable." Mahaprabhu said, "I touch you so that I may be purified. I am not as pure as you. By chanting Hari-nam you are every moment bathing in all the Tirthas, doing *yajna* and *tapa* and reading the Vedas. Who is purer than you?"³¹

Mahaprabhu took Haridas to a garden near Kashi Misra's house and said, "You live here and do Nam-sankirtan. I shall come everyday and meet you. From here you have the *darshan* of the *chakra* of the temple and make obeisance. I will arrange to send your *prasadanna* (food *prasad*) everyday."³²

Mahaprabhu returned to his place after bathing in

³¹ ibid, 170 - 176.

³² ibid, 177 - 179.

the sea. Advaitcharya and the other devotees also reached there after sea-bath and the *darshan* of the *Chuda* of the temple. They sat down to eat. Mahaprabhu served them *prasad* lavishly with his own hands. What a spectacle—the Lord serving His devotees!

But no one would eat until Mahaprabhu also sat down to eat. Svarup made him sit with the devotees. Svarup, Damodar and Jagadanand served. After everyone had eaten, Mahaprabhu himself garlanded them and applied *chandan* (sandalpaste) on their forehead.

SANKIRTAN

Then the devotees went to their lodgings to rest. They came back in the evening. Ramanand also came at this time. Mahaprabhu led them all to the temple of Jagannath and started Sankirtan. The Sankirtan was divided into four groups, which sang round Mahaprabhu while Mahaprabhu danced. The sound of eight *mridangas* and thirty-two *karatals* together with the cries of 'Haribol' made by the Vaishnavs rent the sky.³³

After sometime Mahaprabhu started circumambulating the temple with Sankirtan. Two groups performed Sankirtan in front of him, two behind him. He continued to dance between them. People were

³³ ibid, 97 - 201.

surprised to see tears, horripilation, tremor, sweating and the other Sattvik-*bhavs* storming his body like a tempest. Tears shot forth from his eyes like a fountain and drenched the devotees round him.³⁴

Later Mahaprabhu stopped circumambulating. He remained behind the temple and asked the four principal Acharyas , Advaitcharya, Nityanand, Srivas and Vakreshvar Pandit to dance in the midst of the four Sankirtan parties. He stood in the middle of the four parties to watch everyone singing and dancing. At that time he exhibited his Aishvarya. Each one of the persons dancing and singing saw that he was looking towards him. Krishna Das Kaviraj says that Mahaprabhu desired to see each one of the persons dancing and singing round him simultaneously. He was so absorbed in looking at each that he did not know how he was looking at them all at one and the same time. It was like the Vana-bhojan (dinner in the forest) Lila of Sri Krishna, in which Krishna sat in the middle, His Sakhas (friends) sat round Him and each of the Sakhas saw that He was looking at him.³⁵

The people of Nilachal were surprised to see the grand gala of dance, *sankirtan*, and *prem*. Raja Prataparudra was also surprised to see it from the roof of his palace. It further increased his eagerness to meet Mahaprabhu.

After Sankirtan Mahaprabhu returned to his place

³⁴ C. C., 2, 11, 203 - 206.

³⁵ ibid, 212 - 216.

with the devotees and asked the devotees to go to their places and rest. This kind of Sankirtan with the devotees became a regular routine with Mahaprabhu for as long as they stayed in Nilachal.

MAHARAJA PRATAPARUDRA'S ANXIETY: MAHAPRABHU'S MERCY ON THE PRINCE

Maharaja Prataparudra's anxiety to meet Mahaprabhu reached its climax. He wrote a letter to Sarvabhaum from Cuttack, saying "It is becoming impossible for me to survive without the *darshan* of Mahaprabhu. He is determined not to give *darshan* to me. It may be that if the devotees, who have come from Gaud and who are the very life and soul of Mahaprabhu, try together, he may change his mind. You request them on my behalf to pray to Mahaprabhu for me. If Mahaprabhu does not listen to them, I shall renounce my kingdom and everything and become a recluse. I may even give up my life."³⁶

Sarvabhaum showed the letter to the devotees. They were surprised at the Raja's devotion towards Mahaprabhu. At the same time they were filled with anxiety for him, because they knew that Mahaprabhu would not relent and were afraid that he might be angry, if they approached him in this connection again. Sarvabhaum, however, said, "Let us all go together and instead of requesting him directly to show mercy

³⁶ C. C., 2, 12, 6 - 9.

upon the Raja only speak to him about the Raja's mind."

They went and sat before Mahaprabhu. No one had the courage to say anything. Mahaprabhu said, "It seems that you want to say something. Why don't you say?"

Nityanand said, "We are afraid to say but we also cannot remain without saying that the Raja will become a recluse, if he does not have your *darshan* and mercy."

Mahaprabhu's heart melted to hear this, but outwardly he maintained his harsh attitude. He said, "You want to take me to the Raja! What will the people say? Damodar would be the first to castigate. Let Damodar say what I should do. I will not listen to you."³⁷

Damodar was one of the most favourite devotees of Mahaprabhu. He liked him, because he always watched his behaviour and did not hesitate to point out, if any lapses were knowingly or unknowingly committed by him. Mahaprabhu knew he would never advise that he should meet the Raja. Therefore he offered to act upon his advise.

Damodar said, "You are independent Ishvar. You know what you should or should not do and will do what you like. Who am I to advise? But I know that you will meet the Raja, because though independent, you are always subjugated by love. The Raja loves

³⁷ ibid, 20 - 22.

you. His love will compel you to show mercy on him.”³⁸

Nityanand said, “Who can say that you should meet the Raja? But you know what the devotee’s love for the Ishta makes him do, if he does not attain the Ishta. It makes him leave his body. The wives of the Yajnik Brahmins are an example of this. They left their bodies before their husbands, because with that body they could not meet Krishna. I suggest that you should do something without meeting him, which may prevent him from leaving his body. If you send him a *bahirvas* used by you, it may assuage him and he may survive in the hope that he would also have your *darshan* some day.”³⁹

Mahaprabhu did not have any objection to this. Nityanand took a *bahirvas* of Mahaprabhu from Govind and sent it to the Raja. The Raja was happy to receive it and started worshipping it as a form of Mahaprabhu.⁴⁰

Ramanand had in his own way been trying to favourably turn the mind of Mahaprabhu towards Prataparudra. In his first meeting with him on his coming to Nilachal he had, instead of making any request to him for Prataparudra, only told him how intensely he loved him and how much he was pleased to know about his decision to leave his service in order

³⁸ ibid, 21 - 26.

³⁹ ibid, 27 - 31.

⁴⁰ ibid, 34 - 35.

to serve Mahaprabhu. This had melted his heart and he was pleased to say that Krishna would accept him.

After Mahaprabhu had sent his *bahirvas* to Prataparudra, Ramanand thought he could go a step farther. He said to him one day, "Kindly let the Raja have your *darshan* once."

Mahaprabhu said, "Do you think it is proper for me as a Sannyasi to meet the Raja? Will not the people laugh at me?"

"You are independent Ishvar. Why should you care for the people?"

"I am a man and a Sannyasi. The slightest mistake made by a Sannyasi is noted by the people as a black spot on a white sheet of cloth."

"Since, however, you have shown mercy on so many sinners, is it not proper that you should also be merciful to the Raja, who is your devotee?"

"He may have all the good qualities, the name 'Raja' makes him impure, just as a drop of wine in a pitcher full of milk, makes it impure. Still if you insist on my meeting the Raja, you may do one thing. You may bring his son. I shall meet him. That will assuage the Raja. He will think that he has himself met me, because the Shastras say that the father lives in the son."⁴¹

Ramanand was happy to hear this. He took it as

⁴¹ ibid, 50 - 53.

one more step towards Mahaprabhu's final mercy upon Prataparudra. He went and told him everything and brought his son.

The son was in budding youth and somewhat black in colour. He had big eyes. With yellow garments and ornaments on his body he looked like Krishna. On seeing him Mahaprabhu was reminded of Krishna. He gave him a loving embrace and said, "He is *mahabhagavat*.⁴² On seeing him everyone is reminded of Krishna. I am blessed to see him." As he said this, he embraced him again. By his touch the prince was filled with Krishna-prem. Horripilation, tears, tremor and the other Sattvik-bhavs appeared on his body. He began to say 'Krishna! Krishna!' and dance. Mahaprabhu made him compose himself and asked him to come everyday.⁴³

Raya took the prince back to the Raja. The prince was still in *bhav*. The Raja was happy to see him in *bhav*. He embraced him. As soon as he embraced him, he was overwhelmed with *prem*. He felt as if he had embraced Mahaprabhu himself.⁴⁴ Since then the prince began to be recognized as one of Mahaprabhu's own men.⁴⁵

⁴² An accomplished devotee.

⁴³ ibid, 57 - 62.

⁴⁴ ibid, 63 - 64.

⁴⁵ ibid, 65.

CHAPTER XXII

THE CEREMONIES OF LORD JAGANNATH

SNANA-YATRA (THE BATH CEREMONY)

The Snana-yatra came on. Thousands of people came from different quarters of the country to witness the grand performance. The four divine images were seated at ease on the Snana-vedi.¹ Numerous flags streamed in the air and canopies of variegated colours hung aloft. Musical instruments of every description sounded together to produce a sacred symphony. Mahaprabhu came performing Sankirtan with the devotees. He looked at the face of the Lord and shed copious tears of joy and love. He was sobbing and pouring out the contents of his heart through Sankirtan. The people looked now at Jagannath, now at him. They could not choose between the two. The Sankirtan continued and the *Sattvik-bhavs* adorned the body of Mahaprabhu throughout. The day wore on. The bath ceremony was

¹ The Snana-vedi is the spacious seat on the high floor overlooking the royal road, where the Lord is seated to take bath during the Snana-yatra.

over and the Sankirtan was closed. Then came *Mahaprasad*. All sat down on the Snana-vedi to partake of it. O what joy! They were all like little children. The differences of caste, creed, high and low were forgotten. They were all the members of the universal family of Jagannath. In fraternal love some took a morsel to there neighbour's lips, some snatched a bit of the bitten morsel from the neighbour's mouth and ate.

ANAVASAR (THE PERIOD OF THE LORD'S REST)

It is the time honoured custom in the temple of Jagannath that the Lord would take rest for a fortnight after Snana-yatra, during which time the doors are to be closed and men shut from their gaze at the Lord. We have already mentioned how, when the period of the Lord's rest came. Mahaprabhu felt very restless. It was too much for him to be in the land of the Lord and to go without His *darshan*. He went to Alalanath.² But had to be called back from there on the arrival of the devotees from Gaud.

NAYANOTSAVA (FESTIVAL OF THE EYES)

During the period of the Lord's rest Mahaprabhu had been passing the days in Sankirtan with the devotees

² C. C., 2, 11, 51 - 52.

from Gaud. But he had been pining for the *darshan* of Jagannath. Now at the end of the period of rest came the day of Nayanotsava, when the doors of the temple opened and the devotees, who had for fifteen days been deprived of His *darshan*, ran to the temple for *darshan*. It was virtually for them the day of festival for their eyes. Mahaprabhu went with his companions. His eyes, like the black-bee, sucked the beauty of the lotus-face of the Lord.³ He began to sing:

*"I've pined so long and now Thou art here,
Blessed am I to find Thee Dear.
Oh! How I've suffered—long, so long.
The seconds were years, the hours age-long,
Life unsupportable without Thee,
Weak, but a woman I, silly girl cowherd,
Wise, clever art Thou, O Player on the flute!
Gallant in love's philosophy astute;
Thy killing glances have taken my all
My caste, my lineage, my havings and all.
But when, out of sight, out of Thy Mind!
Why so, dear? Why so unkind?"*

So he went on for sometime, like the *gopis* of Vrindavan, accusing their lover Krishna of His unkindness, and delineating the pangs he had suffered

³ C. C., 2, 12, 208.

in His absence. And then he began to sing in another key, as the pathetic sentiment gave place to rejoicing at the long expected meeting after long separation:

*"Long the light of Thy Face on me hasn't shone,
But now that woeful time is fairly gone.
Happy to look on Thy sweet face again
All sorrows dispelled, relieved all pain.
Look ye, my companions, on the moon-like face.
Look till you are lost in the loving grace."*

He sang and saw the Lord, without blinking the eyes till mid-day, when the devotees took him home, much against his will.

GUNDICHA MARJAN (THE CLEANSING OF THE GUNDICHA TEMPLE)

The Ratha-yatra arrived. Ratha-yatra means Lord Jagannath's travelling by Rath from Nilachal to the Gundicha temple in Sunderachal. The place, where Jagannath's temple exists, is called Nilachal; the place, where Gundicha temple exists, is called Sunderachal. After Rath-yatra Jagannath lives in the Gundicha temple for nine days. During the rest of the year the Gundicha temple remains vacant. It becomes necessary to clean it before Rath-yatra. Formerly the servants of Jagannath used to clean it. Now Mahaprabhu took upon himself the responsibility of doing this service every year with his companions. He regarded the service as

an important part of Vraj-lila. He had the conceit and *bhav* of Radha. He regarded Jagannath as Krishna. Sunderachal was for him Vrindavan and Gundicha the *kunj* or bower in which Radha lived. Ratha-yatra was Krishna's yatra (Journey) to Vrindavan to meet Radha in her *kunj* after she had suffered a long period of separation. It was a festive occasion. Therefore the *kunj* had to be thoroughly cleaned before the arrival of Krishna.

Mahaprabhu needed one hundred brooms and one hundred pitchers for cleaning the Gundicha temple. These were supplied to him by Kashi Misra.⁴ He gave the hundred brooms to hundred devotees and the hundred pitchers to another hundred and started singing and dancing with the devotees towards the Gundicha-mandir a day before Ratha-yatra.

They first swept the temple with brooms. Mahaprabhu himself taught them how to sweep so that not a particle of dirt or dust was left. They swept the floor. They swept the walls. They swept every nook and corner of the temple. They shouted 'Krishna Krishna!' as they swept. Some shed tears of love as they chanted and swept.⁵ They swept the temple twice. Then came the washing. Mahaprabhu cried 'water'. They ran to fetch water from the Indradumn-sarovar and from the wells. They came with pitchers full of water, pitchers in hand, pitchers on head. They poured

⁴ *ibid*, 74 - 75.

⁵ *ibid*, 81 - 83.

and washed all parts of the temple, singing and dancing in heavenly glee. After washing Mahaprabhu rubbed the floor of the temple and the altar with his garments.⁶

After resting for a while Mahaprabhu started dancing. The devotees sang round him and he danced in the middle. He was so overwhelmed with *bhav* that he roared like a lion and danced like a mad elephant. The sky rent with his roar, the ground trembled under his feet. All the Sattvik-*bhavs* appeared on his body. Fountain of tears sprang out of his eyes to bathe him and the devotees round him.⁷

Mahaprabhu again sat down to rest. He asked Srigopal, the son of Advaitcharya to dance. While dancing Srigopal was so overwhelmed with *prem* that he fell senseless on the ground. Advaitcharya took him in his lap. He was very much distressed to see that he had stopped breathing. He recited the Nrisingha Mantra and sprinkled water over him and roared aloud, but without any result. He began to weep. The other devotees also wept. Then Mahaprabhu placed his hand over his chest and shouted, "Gopal! Wake up." His consciousness revived. The devotees shouted 'Hari!' and began to dance.⁸

Mahaprabhu and the devotees then went to the Indradyunm-Sarovar to bathe. After they had bathed, they went to the nearby garden for taking *prasad*.

⁶ *ibid*, 101.

⁷ C. C., 2, 12, 134 - 138.

⁸ *ibid*, 140 - 146.

Baninath brought Jagannath's *prasad* in huge quantity. Everyone sat down to eat. Svarup Damodar, Jagadanand, Kashishvar, Gopinath and Baninath began to serve. Mahaprabhu said, "Give me *laphara*,⁹ and give sweets and the other dainties to the devotees." Jagadanand, however, from time to time served him some sweets forcibly. Mahaprabhu expressed anger, but he did not desist. While serving to the devotees, he occasionally turned to Mahaprabhu to see whether he was eating or not the sweets served by him. When Mahaprabhu saw him watching, he ate them a little, because he was afraid that if he did not, he would go on fast.¹⁰

Mahaprabhu knew the choice of the devotees. He asked the people serving to serve each the item he liked most in good quantity. As the feasting went on, the cries of 'Haribol' by the devotees echoed from time to time. After feasting Mahaprabhu himself garlanded the devotees and applied *chandan* to their forehead.

RATHA-YATRA (JAGANNATH'S RIDING ON CHARIOT)

On the Ratha-yatra day lacs of pilgrims had come from distant places. They were standing here, there and everywhere. They filled every inch of the royal road

⁹ Mixture of different vegetables.

¹⁰ *ibid*, 166 - 169.

before the temple. They filled the flat roofs of the houses, the verandahs, the doors and windows of the houses, standing on the road, to watch the *Pahundi-vijaya*¹¹ and the *Rath-yatra* of the Lord.

Mahaprabhu came with his companions to see the *Pahundi-vijaya*. Maharaja Prataparudra made special arrangements so that he might have no difficulty in *darshan* on account of the crowd.¹² He also began to sweep the path of the Lord with a yellow broom.

As the lord moved on from one cotton-pad to the other, the pad burst under His feet and created a loud sound. The devotees cried 'Haribol!' Musical instruments of different kinds, the *mridangas*, the *karatals*, the conch, the *jhakarajhain kansar* and the rest began to rend the sky.

Gradually the Lord ascended the Rath, huge as Mt. Sumeru,¹³ beautifully decorated with flags and buntions. Balaram and Subhadra ascended two other Raths that followed. The Raths started moving as they were pulled by hundreds of people. Mahaprabhu started Sankirtan. He divided his companions into seven

¹¹ The expression literally means in Urhiya 'walking on legs'. The images are tied with costly bands of diverse colours and are apparently seated successively on the large, round pads of cotton, arranged in a row for the occasion, but the devotees see that the Lord walks at ease over the bales and makes His way towards the Rath.

¹² C.C., 2, 12, 5 - 6.

¹³ *ibid*, 18.

groups. Four groups performed dance and Sankirtan in front of the Rath of Jagannath, two on either side and one behind it.¹⁴

The sound of fourteen *mridangas* and *kirtan* drowned the sound of all other musical instruments. Mahaprabhu desired to be with each of the Sankirtan parties. His *lila-shakti* made him appear simultaneously in the midst of each, shouting 'Hari, Hari' and 'Jaya, Jaya Jagannath', with hands raised and eyes shedding tears of love. Each Sankirtan party thought that Mahaprabhu was revelling in Sankirtan with them and not with any other party.¹⁵ Jagannath was so pleased with Sankirtan that He made the Rath stop for a while to hear it.¹⁶

After sometime Mahaprabhu desired to dance himself. He collected the seven Sankirtan parties together. He selected ten persons, including Svarupa and Srivas to sing while he danced in the middle. These ten persons constituted the inner circle of Sankirtan. Others remained in the outer circle to sing with them.¹⁷

Mahaprabhu made obeisance to Jagannath, looked towards Him with folded hands and sang hymns in His praise. After singing he again made obeisance to

¹⁴ *ibid*, 47.

¹⁵ *ibid*, 50 - 52.

¹⁶ *ibid*, 54.

¹⁷ *ibid*, 71 - 74.

Him and made obeisance to the devotees.¹⁸ Then maddened in love, he started his mad dance with a loud roar that rent the sky. The ground under his feet shook as he danced. Tremor, horripilation, stupor, sweating and the other Sattvik-*bhavs* all appeared on his body. The tide of *bhav* that swelled in his heart threatened to make him unconscious and fall on the ground. Nityanand stood behind him with both of his hands spread to prevent him from falling. Advaitcharya roared in *bhav* and Haridas shouted 'Haribol' behind Nityanand.¹⁹

The crowd began to swell. Three circles were formed round Mahaprabhu to keep away the crowd. The first circle was made by Nityanand who always kept his arms spread round him. Kashishvar, Govind and the other stout-bodied devotees made the second circle by holding each other's hand. The third circle was formed by Raja Prataparudra and his men.²⁰

Srivas Pandit happened to stand just in front of Prataparudra and obstructed his vision of Mahaprabhu. Prataparudra's minister Harischandra tried to push him aside. Srivas was so absorbed in looking at the dance of Mahaprabhu that he did not even look back to see who was pushing and why. When Harischandra pushed him repeatedly, he became angry and gave him a slap. Harischandra also was infuriated. Prataparudra

¹⁸ *ibid*, 75 - 76.

¹⁹ *ibid*, 77 - 82.

²⁰ *ibid*, 83 - 85.

restrained him from saying or doing anything. He said to him, "You are blessed to have received the touch of the hand of a close companion of Mahaprabhu. I am sorry not to have been so blessed."²¹

Everyone was surprised to see the love-dance of Mahaprabhu. Jagannath Himself was stupefied. He stopped the Rath to watch the dance. Sattvaik-*bhavs*, which adorned Mahaprabhu's body throughout the dance, became more intense. Horripilation became so intense that the skin under the hair on the body swelled like the thorns on a jack-fruit; the teeth trembled so vigourously that it appeared they would fall. Tears shot out of his eyes like a fountain and bathed the people all round. The golden colour of his body sometimes became red and sometimes like the colour of a Mallika flower. He sometimes tried to say 'Jaya Jagannath', but could only say 'Jaya-gaga, Jaya-gaga'. He was sometimes attacked by stupor; sometimes he fell senseless on the ground and stopped breathing.²²

The intensity of the Sattvik-*bhavs* of Mahaprabhu indicated the intensity of the bliss that reigned within his heart on seeing Jagannath. Mahaprabhu in Radha-*bhav* imagined that he (she) had met Krishna in Kurukshetra a long time after he had gone to Mathura with Akrura. Hence the excessive joy in having His *darshan*.

²¹ *ibid*, 87 - 92.

²² *ibid*, 96 - 103.

Mahaprabhu always saw Jagannath, not as Jagannath, but as Sri Krishna in Kuruksetra, not in Vraj. The reason was that Jagannath had with him Balaram and Subhadra and Subhadra never came to Vraj.²³ She had gone to Kurushetra with Krishna.

Radha had met Krishna in Kuruksheta, when he had gone there from Dvarka with His wives and Subhadra, and She had gone with Her Sakhis, Nand, Yashoda, *gopas* and *gopis* to meet Him. Krishna had met Radha in seclusion. Radha was at first overwhelmed with *bhav* to see Krishna after a long period of separation. But as soon as Her *bhav* subsided, She deplored having met Krishna, not as the cowherd in the natural surroundings of Vrindavan, but as the ruler of Dvarka in the artificial and imperial surroundings of Kurukshetra. Radha blamed Krishna for having been out of Vrindavan so long and requested Him to return to Vrindavan.

The conversation that took place between Krishna and Radha at that time is given in Srimad Bhagavat, Chapter 10/82. Mahaprabhu in the *bhav* of Radha had so far been dancing in exuberance of joy on meeting Krishna in Kurukshetra after so long a time. Now his *bhav* changed and he began to deplore like Radha his meeting Him in Kurukshetra and to desire meeting Him in Vrindavan.

Mahaprabhu recited the famous '*yah kaumaraharah*' Shlok, relating to the first meeting

²³ C. C., 2, 2, 46 - 47.

between an ordinary hero and ordinary heroin of the mundane world, in which the heroin says to her Sakhi, "O Sakhi! After our marriage my lover and I are the same, but I pine, for the happiness of our first meeting under a Vetasi tree on the bank of the river Bera, in the month of Chaitra, when the cool breeze was blowing and filling the atmosphere with the fragrance of Malati flowers and when my lover deprived me of my virginity."²⁴

No one could understand why Mahaprabhu recited the Slok relating to the mundane love between the lovers of the mundane world except Svarup. Mahaprabhu recited the Slok and danced. Krishna Das Kaviraj describes the conversation between Jagannath in the *bhav* of Krishna²⁵ and Mahaprabhu in the *bhav* of Radha. The conversation is apparently a repetition of the conversation as described in Srimad Bhagavat, but is in reality the natural outcome of the Kurukshetra-*bhav*, with which both Jagannath and Mahaprabhu were, for the time being, possessed. It was as if the Kuruksetra-lila itself again came to life.

Mahaprabhu in the *bhav* of Radha said to Krishna in the form of Jagannath, "You are the same Krishna, I am the same Radha. But our meeting now is not the same as in Vrindavan. In Vrindavan we used to meet

²⁴ C. C., 2, 13, 6. Mahaprabhu used to recite this Slok at the time of Rath-yatra every year.

²⁵ Jagannath is bound to reciprocate the *bhav* of the devotee according to the Gita Shlok 4/11.

in the natural surroundings of Yamuna and Govardhan, under the Kadamba trees or in bowers, where only the humming sound of bees and the twitter of birds was heard. Here we meet in the artificial surroundings of crowded Kuruksetra, where the roar of elephants and horses and the rattling sound of chariots is always heard. Here you are a king. Your dress is royal, your companions are ksatriyas and you wield weapons. There you were a *gopa* (cowherd), your companions were *gopas*, you wore a peacock feather on your crown and played the flute. The happiness that I enjoy in your company here is not even a drop of the ocean of happiness in your company in Vrindavan. Be kind enough again to revel in your Lila with us in Vrindavan. You have been unkind to us by coming away from Vrindavan and making us suffer your separation so long. Do not let us suffer your separation any more.”²⁶

Jagannath replied as Krishna, “Dear! Do you think that I came away from you of my own. It is God, Who unites and separates the *jivas*, just as the wind unites and separates the straw and dust. God chose to separate Me from you.”

“As for us, you are yourself our God. We do not recognize any other God. You chose Yourself to come away,” said Radha.

²⁶ *ibid*, 120 - 125.

"Very well," said Krishna, "If I am God, you should know that I sit in your hearts as Paramatma, as in the heart of everyone else. You have no reason to think that I am separate from you. You fix your mind on Me as Paramatman, always sitting in your heart and you will no more have to suffer separation. Besides by meditating on Me as Paramatman you will be delivered from the well of this world and realize eternal peace and happiness."

Though Krishna also said this in the spirit of humour, Radha (Mahaprabhu) did not take it lightly. She was reminded of Krishna's once sending Uddhav to Her to teach Her the same kind of *jnana*. She said in anger, "You are unkind and clever. Once before you sent Uddhav to teach us the same kind of *jnana-yoga*. We are not yogis. We are ordinary cowherdesses. It is not possible for us to meditate on You as Parameshvar. Only they can thus meditate on You, who can detach their minds from everything else. But we cannot detach our mind from You. You have so captured our mind that even when we try to turn it from You so that we may attend to our worldly duties, we cannot. Having thus captured our mind, You now ask us to fix it upon Parameshvar. Who can be more unkind than You?"²⁷

"You also know that there is no world for us from which we have to seek deliverance. Only they live in the well of this world and need deliverance, who have

²⁷ C. C., 2, 13, 132 - 134.

identified themselves with the body. The world exists only for them. But we are not attached to the body. We do not even have any body consciousness. If we have any, it is because we do not regard it as our own. We regard it as a means of your happiness. If we protect it or decorate it, it is only to serve You with it for Your happiness, not our own. We are fallen, but not in the well of this world. We are fallen in the limitless ocean of your *viraha* (separation). In the ordinary ocean exist crocodiles, which swallow fish. But in this ocean exists a whale, which can swallow even the crocodile. The whale is the whale of Kamagni (the fire of Kama²⁸), which threatens to consume us. You take pity on us and pull us out of this ocean by giving us your company in Vrindavan.”²⁹

“Vrindavan is our life and soul. We cannot leave Vrindavan. We cannot also live without You, because You are the life and soul of Vrindavan. We do not know what our fate is going to be. Vrindavan is lifeless without You. So are we lifeless without You. Our only hope lies in Your mercy. Be merciful enough to breathe life into Vrindavan and into our dead bodies by returning to Vrindavan and revelling there with us in Lilas like Rasa, so dear to you.”³⁰

²⁸ *Kama* does not mean lust, but *prem* or the intense desire to serve Krishna for His own pleasure, without any regard for the pleasure or displeasure of one's own self.

²⁹ C. C., 2, 13, 135 136.

³⁰ *ibid*, 139 - 140.

As Krishna heard Radha say all this in piteous tone, He was moved to the core. Tears rolled down His eyes to hear about the pure and intense love the *gopis* and *gopas* of Vraj bore in their simple hearts for Him. He felt deeply indebted to them and began to assure them that He would fulfill their wish.³¹

He said, "Listen Radha, dear to Me as my life! My heart always weeps for all the people of Vraj. No one knows this. All the people of Vraj, my parents, friends and others are all dear to me like my life. Amongst them the *gopis* are my life itself and you are the life of my life. I am completely sold out to you on account of your love. But cruel fate has taken me far away from you. It is true that it is not possible for the lovers to live without each other. But in separation each tries to drag on life and suffer, because his death would mean the death of the other."³²

"In My anxiety to preserve your life in separation from Me, I always pray to Naranyan for you. But your love for Me is so powerful that it drags Me to you from wherever I am. I always go to you and indulge in different kinds of Lila with you. You regard it as *sphurti*.³³ Soon, however, you will see that your love makes Me present Myself to you physically."³⁴

³¹ *ibid*, 141.

³² *ibid*, 142 - 146.

³³ Presentation in imagination.

³⁴ *ibid*, 147 - 148.

"I had to come away from Vraj, because in order to protect Vraj and the Vrajvasis I had to kill Kamsa and his supporters, the enemies of the Yadavas. They have all been killed except one or two. You can rest assured that I shall wipe them out from earth in ten or twenty days and then go to you."

Sri Krishna further emphasized His resolve to go to Vrindavan soon by reciting a Shlok which meant:

"Anyone, who practises Bhakti towards Me, comes to Me and attains My Parshadatva (companionship). But you do not have to come to Me, I have Myself to go to you, attracted by your *prem*. Your *prem* will soon forcibly attract and take Me to you in Vrindavan. It is My good fortune that your love towards Me is so deep." (Bh., 10, 82, 44).

On hearing this there was no limit to the happiness of Radha (or Mahaprabhu in the *bhav* of Radha). Not being able to contain the happiness Mahaprabhu started his mad dance. He lost outward consciousness. All kinds of Sattvik-*bhavs* appeared on his body like flowers blooming on a mount and the fountain of tears springing from his eyes drenched the people round him. Everyone was stupefied. Even Jagannath was stupefied. He stopped the Rath for a while to let him dance freely. While thus dancing in frenzy Mahaprabhu toppled on Prataparudra. The touch of the Raja revived his outward consciousness. He said, "Pooh, pooh! I have touched the Raja!"³⁵

³⁵ *ibid*, 162 - 174.

Krishnadas Kaviraj says that although Mahaprabhu was pleased with the Raja to see his menial service as sweeper on the path of Jagannath, he outwardly showed his displeasure to teach others, who had renounced the world. The Raja was filled with fear. Sarvabhum assuaged him by saying, "You need not fear. Mahaprabhu is pleased with you. His expression of displeasure was meant for his companions, whom he wanted to teach a lesson. At appropriate occasion I shall ask you to go and submit to him."³⁶

Mahaprabhu circumambulated the Rath of Jagannath and pushed it from behind with his forehead. The Rath began to move. Then after dancing for a while with his companions before Baladev and Subhadra he again began to dance before Jagannath.³⁷

Soon the Rath reached Balagandi, where, as customary it stops for the *bhog* of Jagannath. Mahaprabhu was taken by his companions to a nearby garden to rest. He sat in the verandah of the garden-house with his back resting against the wall and legs stretched out. He was still lost in *prem* and had no outward consciousness. Gopinath and others were sitting at some distance from him. At this time, at the instance of Sarvabhaum, Prataparudra cast away the dress of Raja and proceeded towards Mahaprabhu in the guise of an ordinary Vaishnav. Gopinath shuddered to see him. He did not know what his fate was going

³⁶ *ibid*, 176 - 180.

³⁷ *ibid*, 181 - 184.

to be. The powerful Raja, who was a terror to his enemies, was himself trembling with fear, as he moved slowly towards Mahaprabhu. He had, however, the faith that whatever might happen, he would at least touch the feet of Mahaprabhu and be blessed. So he went quietly, touched Mahaprabhu's feet with his forehead and began to massage them gently.³⁸ While massaging he recited the Shlokas of Gopi-gita (the song of the *gopis*) from Srimad Bhagavat (10, 31). As he recited the Slok 'jayati te'dhikam' Mahaprabhu's face brightened. The Raja felt encouraged. He recited the next Slok which meant:

"Beloved! You have pierced our hearts with your eyes, more beautiful than even the lotus flowers blooming in winter. Don't you know that wounds are caused not only by weapons, but also by eyes?"

Mahaprabhu's face brightened all the more. Enjoying the Rasa of the Slok, he said with eyes closed, "Go on, what did the *gopis* say after that?" The Raja went on reciting one Slok after another till he came to the ninth Slok which means:

"Beloved! The nectar of the talks about You (*tava Kathamritam*) breathes life into the hearts of the devotees suffering separation from You. It is sweet beyond description, and soothing and purifying. Those, who narrate them, are *bhurida* (the best benefactors)." ³⁹

³⁸ C. C., 2, 14, 3 - 6.

³⁹ *ibid*, 7.

Mahaprabhu was overwhelmed to hear the Slok. He shouted '*Bhurida! Bhurida!*' and embraced the Raja, without knowing whom he was embracing. He said, "I have nothing to give you for the valuable service you have rendered. Therefore I give you my embrace." He embraced the Raja and began himself to recite the Slok. Locked in each other's arms, both recited the Slok and bathed each other with the tears of their eyes. Their bodies trembled on account of *prem*.⁴⁰

Mahaprabhu said, "Who are you my friend, who did immense good to me by suddenly pouring into my ears the nectar of Krishna lila?" The Raja said, "I am your servant's servant. I only live on the hope that you would kindly accept me as such." Mahaprabhu then showed him His divine form and said, "Do not reveal this secret to anyone." No one knows what actually was the divine form he showed the Raja.⁴¹ But everyone was happy to see how fortune had suddenly smiled on him. He made obeisance to Mahaprabhu. Then with folded hands he bowed down before his companions.

Krishnadas Kaviraj describes the wonderful power of the mercy of Mahaprabhu. He says it is even more powerful than Mahaprabhu and acts independently of him. Mahaprabhu had persistently ignored the Raja and

⁴⁰ *ibid*, 11.

⁴¹ *ibid*, 15 - 17.

had cursed himself for accidentally touching him once. But his mercy compelled him to embrace him even without his knowing.⁴²

At this time Sarvabhaum, Ramnand and Baninath brought different kinds of delicious *prasad* of Jagannath to be served to the devotees. The *prasad* was in such abundance that it filled half of the garden. Mahaprabhu was happy to see it. He started serving to the devotees with his own hands. To each devotee he served as much as would have been sufficient for ten. Jagannath's *prasad* and that too served by the hands of Mahaprabhu was extremely relished by them. They ate it to their hearts content. At their insistence Mahaprabhu also sat down and ate with them.⁴³

It was now time for the Rath to move. The people held the ropes of the Rath and tried to pull it, but it would not move. The Raja himself tried to pull it along with a band of his stout army men. Still the Rath did not move. The Raja then engaged a number of elephants to pull the Rath, but they also could not make it move even an inch. This was a bad omen for the Raja. In utter desperation he looked towards Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu removed the elephants. He asked his companions to pull the Rath from the front, while he pushed it with his forehead from behind. As soon as he did this the Rath began to move swiftly

⁴² C. C., 2, 14, 13 - 14.

⁴³ *ibid*, 22 - 41.

with a roaring sound. The devotees shouted 'Jai Jagannath! Jai Mahaprabhu!'⁴⁴

In a trice the Rath reached the Gundicha temple. Jagannath sat on the altar. Mahaprabhu performed dance and *kirtan* before Him. After *arati* he proceeded to the Jagannath Vallabh garden with his companions.

As long as the Rath remained in Sunderachal, Mahaprabhu stayed in this garden with his companions. This was a period of rejoicing for them all. They all had the *gopi-bhav*. They were happy, because Krishna had come to Vrindavan and the days of suffering in separation from Him had ended.⁴⁵ Every day in the morning they sang and danced before Him. Then they went to the spacious pond called Indradyumn-sarovar. They plunged into it and played like children. Advaitcharya, Nityanand, Ramnand, Svarup, Sarvabhuam and all others forgot everything about their age, position, learning, dignity and gravity and indulged in water-fighting (*jala-yuddha*) with each other. Advaitcharya fought with Nityanand. When defeated he abused him like children defeated in game.⁴⁶ Nityanand laughed. Sarvabhaum fought with Ramnand. When Mahaprabhu saw them fighting, he laughed and said to Gopinath, "They are both highly learned and highly respected. What will people say to see them fighting? You restrain them." Gopinath laughed and

⁴⁴ *ibid*, 45 - 55.

⁴⁵ *ibid*, 71 - 72.

⁴⁶ *ibid*, 77.

said, "Prabhu! They are drowned in the ocean of your mercy and have drunk deep of the wine of Krishna-prem. Why not let them enjoy the intoxication?"⁴⁷

Mahaprabhu also did not lag behind in the play. He made Advaitcharya lie in water like Shesha-shaiya⁴⁸ and himself lay down on him like the Sheshashayi Bhagavan.⁴⁹

Crowd after crowd poured to watch the four hundred devotees, drunk with the wine of Krishna-prem, playing in the pond like children.

After the pastime in water Mahaprabhu went to Aitota with the devotees. Baninath brought *prasad*. They had their mid-day meal. In the afternoon they performed dance and kirtan in the Jagannath temple. Then they returned to the garden. For Mahaprabhu Sunderachal was Vrindavan and the Jagannath Vallabh garden was a forest of Vrindavan. In this *bhav* he went about in the garden embracing each tree and dancing under it. Svarup and Vasudev Dutt sang while he danced.⁵⁰

In this way Mahaprabhu lived with his companions in Sunderachal for nine days.

After Rath-yatra the devotees from Gaud stayed in Nilachal till the end of Chaturmasya. Each day

⁴⁷ *ibid*, 80 - 85.

⁴⁸ Bed of the multifaced cobra.

⁴⁹ C. C., 2, 14, 86 - 67.

⁵⁰ C. C., 2, 14, 94 - 99.

Mahaprabhu was invited by one of them to take *prasad* at his place along with the other devotees. Thus each day there was festival at the house of one or the other devotee from Gaud.⁵¹

OTHER CEREMONIES

The devotees also enjoyed with Mahaprabhu the other ceremonies that fell during this period. On the Krishna-janmashtami day Mahaprabhu and the devotees dressed themselves as *gopas*. Kanai Khutiya dressed as Nand and Jagannath Mahiti as Yashoda. The devotees, including Sarvabhaum, Ramnand, Kashimisra and Prataparudra went with Mahaprabhu to the place of Nand with pitchers full of milk and curd on their shoulders.⁵² They sang and danced merrily before Nand and Yashoda and sprinkled milk, curd and tamaric water upon each other.⁵³ Advaitacharya said to Mahaprabhu, "If you can turn the staff quickly round and round like a wheel then only I shall recognize you as *gopa*." Mahaprabhu immediately began to turn the staff. He turned it round and round above his head, on his back, to his right and left and between his legs and occasionally threw it high and caught it again. Everyone was surprised and laughed to see the performance.⁵⁴ Prataparudra gifted a costly silken cloth

⁵¹ *ibid*, 17 - 22.

⁵² *ibid*, 17 - 22.

⁵³ *ibid*, 22.

⁵⁴ *ibid*, 23 - 26.

to each devotee to be tied round his head. Kanai Khulia and Jagannath were so possessed with the *bhav* of Nand and Yashoda that they threw everything in their house to be plundered by the devotees.⁵⁵

On the Vijayadashami day Mahaprabhu was possessed with the *bhav* of Hanuman and the devotees with the *bhav* of monkeys. Mahaprabhu as Hanuman attacked Lanka with an army of monkeys and shouted in anger, "Where is Ravan? I shall kill him and all the rest of his family."

One might wonder why Mahaprabhu and his learned and respectable companions like Svarup, Ramnand, Sarvabhaum, Kashi Misra and Gopinath indulged in this kind of Lila like children. But there is no reason to wonder, because their hearts were filled with Krishna-*prem*. Prema is Rasa. When the heart is overfilled with Rasa, it spills. Lila, in which the devotees revelled was the natural spilling out of Rasa that filled their hearts. Similar Lilas were enjoyed by the devotees on the occasion of Dipavali, Rasa-yatra and other festivals.

MAHAPRABHU'S SECRET TALKS WITH NITYANAND

It was now time for the devotees from Gaud to return. Mahaprabhu had some secret talks with Nityanand in

⁵⁵ *ibid*, 28 - 31.

seclusion. No one knew what they talked about.⁵⁶ It appears that later Nityanand himself disclosed the talks to his disciple Vrindavan Das. Vrindavan Das gives an account of the talks in Chaitanya Bhagavat.

Before giving an account of the talks he says, "Nityanand lived in Nilachal like an Avadhut . He was full of joy and gaiety. But he was always restive and mad with love. When he went to the temple for *darshan* the Pujaris and the servants of Jagannath became cautious and watchful lest he might do something against the sanctity of the temple or the deities. One day, when he was doing *kirtan* before Jagannath, he was swept by such a strong wave of *bhav* that he shot forth like an arrow towards the deity to embrace Him. The servants of the temple ran to hold him. Just as a powerful servant touched him, he pushed him away with such force that he fell several yards away. He ran with the speed of lightening and embraced the *vigrah* of Balaram.⁵⁷ He also took away the garland from His neck and wore it himself.⁵⁸ Then he came out of the temple laughing and dancing."

"Nityanand used to roam about in Nilachal freely, singing and dancing in ecstasy, but he went to see Mahaprabhu three times every day. In his presence he used to be calm and quiet and self-composed. Mahaprabhu used to stand up on seeing him, make

⁵⁶ C. C., 2, 15, 38 -39.

⁵⁷ C. Bh., 3, 3, 194 - 195.

⁵⁸ *ibid*, 196 - 197.

obeisance to him, and glorify him. Nityanand only laughed.

One day Mahaprabhu made him sit near him. He held both of his hands with both of his and said, "Sripad! I am deeply concerned about one thing. I have vowed that I shall deliver the *jivas*, the rich and the poor, the learned and the illiterate, the Brahmins and the Shudras and make them all frenzied with the love of Krishna.⁵⁹ But I have taken Sannyas and am living in Nilachal as bidden by Ma. I have been swept away from the world by the current of Krishna-*prem*. I have no connection with the people. If you also remain a Sannyasi, who will deliver them? You comply with my request. Go to Gaud, become a householder, preach Krishna-*prem* and make the Ganga of Krishna-*prem* flow through the desert of the world."⁶⁰

From the ordinary point of view Mahaprabhu's request was against *dharma*. He would not make the request, if it were not for a deeper *dharma*. The main purpose of Mahaprabhu's appearance was to show the path of Bhakti to the *jivas*. It was for the fulfillment of this purpose that he took Sannyas. After him Gadadhar and Svarup took Sannyas. Vishvarup had already left home and become a Sannyasi. This could give rise to the impression that it was necessary to renounce the world to be delivered from the world.

⁵⁹ C. Bh., 3, 5, 224.

⁶⁰ *ibid*, 229.

According to the Vaishnav *dharma* it is neither necessary to renounce the world nor to crush the senses. What is necessary is to turn the mind and the senses towards Krishna. The Vaishnavs do so and live in the world of senses freely and fearlessly in the same manner in which the snake-charmer plays with the snake freely and fearlessly after he has rubbed its mouth and deprived it of its poison. Mahaprabhu thought that the best way to remove from the minds of the people the impression that Sannyas was necessary for Krishna realization was to ask his second self Nityanand to establish an ideal for the householders, just as he was establishing an ideal for the Sannyasis. In this way he would not only prove that Sannyas was not necessary for the attainment of Krishna, he would also prove that there was no *dharma* superior to *prem-dharma*. Just as *gopis* had renounced *lok-dharma* and *Veda-dharma* for Krishna-prem, Sannyas-*dharma* could be renounced for *Krishna-prem* or for the fulfilment of some purpose of Krishna.

But Nityanand was stunned and stupefied to hear what Mahaprabhu said. He had renounced the world and become a Sannyasi, when he was too young, and had been going about from place to place in search of Krishna. He felt that great injustice was being done to him by making him now to renounce Sannyas and become a householder. He said, "Prabhu! What do you say? Is it not against Sannyas *dharma* to give up Sannyas? Is it proper that you establish the ideal of Sannyas by strictly following the rules of Sannyas as

laid down in the Shastra and I go against the Shastras by renouncing Sannyas? Is it proper that you suffer all the trials and tribulations of Sannyas and I enjoy the pleasures of the household? Besides, you tell me yourself how I can live without you. I will not leave you and go anywhere. I shall live here and do whatever you say."

"Then how will the *jivas* be delivered?" asked Mahaprabhu.

"You know that and your *jivas*," curtly replied Nityanand.

The words of Nityanand touched the tendermost corner of the heart of Mahaprabhu. Tears streamed out of his eyes.

Nityanand could not see the tears in his eyes. He said, "Prabhu! Tell me what I have to do. I shall do what you say."

Mahaprabhu was pleased. He embraced Nityanand. Both threw their arms round each other and bathed each other with the tears of their eyes. Nityanand agreed to go to Gaud and preach Krishna-*bhakti*.

FAREWELL TO THE DEVOTEES FROM GAUD

Mahaprabhu then bade farewell to the devotees. While bidding farewell to them he said, "Come every year to meet me and to participate in Gundicha-marjan." He said to Advaitcharya, "Go and give Bhakti to everyone howsoever low." To Nityanand he said, "You

must freely and extensively preach *prem-bhakti* in the whole of Gaud. I give you Ramdas, Gadadhar and some other devotees to assist you in preaching.⁶¹ I shall go to you from time to time to see your dance without being visible to others."⁶² He embraced Srivas and said, "I shall always dance in the *kirtan* in your house. You will see me and no one else."⁶³ He gave him a *sari* and Jagannath's *prasad* and said, "Give this to Ma. Tell her that I feel guilty, because I have taken Sannyas, when I should have been at home to serve her. Ask her to forgive me for my offense. Also tell her that I live in Nilachal as ordained by her, but I go to her everyday for her *darshan*. She sees me, but she regards it as *sphurti*."⁶⁴

"One day she cooked various kinds of dainties dear to me and offered them in a *thal*⁶⁵ to Gopal. Then she took the *thal* on her lap and began to weep, thinking that I was not there to eat. I went and ate everything. When she wiped her tears, she was surprised to see that the *thal* was empty. She thought that perhaps Gopal or some animal had eaten all, or perhaps it was all an illusion and she had actually not offered the *bhog* to Gopal. She went to the kitchen to see whether the pots in which the food was cooked

⁶¹ C. C., 2, 15, 43 - 44.

⁶² *ibid*, 45.

⁶³ *ibid*, 46 - 47.

⁶⁴ *ibid*, 48 - 54.

⁶⁵ A big plate.

were full or empty. She saw that they were full. The mystery deepened. She was not able to understand what had actually happened. She again offered the *bhog* to Gopal. On the recent Vijayadashami day the same thing happened. You tell her all about this so that she believes that I actually go and eat.”⁶⁶

To Shivanand Sen Mahaprabhu said, “It will be your duty to bring every year my devotees from Gaud at your expense. You should also take care of Vasudev Dutt and his family and help them financially according to their needs. They need your help, because Vasudev is too generous and reckless. He spends whatever he gets without saving anything for the next day. A householder must save, but he cannot.”

Ramnand and Satyaraj Khan said, “Prabhu! We are householders. Tell us how a householder should live and what Sadhana he should practise.”

Mahaprabhu said, “He should serve Krishna and the Vaishnavs and do Krishna-nam-kirtan.”⁶⁷

Satyaraj said, “Prabhu! Tell us how to recognize a Vaishnav. What are his characteristics?”

Prabhu said, “Anyone, who utters the name of Krishna but once is a Vaishnav, because the name destroys all sins even if uttered only once. The nine kinds of Bhakti are incomplete without the Name. But the Name is independent of everything else. It is

⁶⁶ *ibid*, 55 - 67.

⁶⁷ C. C., 2, 15, 105.

independent even of Diksha and the other rules and regulations of Vaidhi Bhakti.”⁶⁸ On another occasion Mahaprabhu categorized the Vaishnavs by saying that those who chant the name only once belong to the first category, those who chant the name always belong to the second and higher category, those whose *darshan* inspires people to chant Harinam, belong to the third and the highest category.⁶⁹

Mahaprabhu then embraced Vasudev and began to eulogize him. Vasudev could not hear his eulogy. He interrupted and said, “Prabhu! It grieves me to see the suffering of the people of this world. Give me the sins of all and let me go to hell, but deliver them from the bondage and suffering of the world.”

Mahaprabhu was moved to hear this. Tears began to roll down from his eyes and his body began to tremble. He said, “It is not strange that you should have this kind of *bhav*, because you are no other than Prahalad. Krishna is kind to you. He is bound to fulfill the wishes of his devotees. He has nothing to do except catering to their wishes. He will, according to your wish, deliver all the *jivas*, without your undergoing any suffering for them”⁷⁰

Mahaprabhu bade farewell to all the devotees after embracing and eulogizing each. Only Gadadhar Pandit,

⁶⁸ *ibid*, 107 - 111; *Padyavali*, 29.

⁶⁹ C. C., 2, 16, 71 - 74.

⁷⁰ *ibid*, 160 - 171.

Puri Gosain, Svarup, Damodar Pandit, Jagadanand, Govind and Kashishvar remained with him.⁷¹

SARVABHAUM'S INVITATION TO MAHAPRABHU

One day Sarvabhaum said to Mahaprabhu with folded hands, "Prabhu! Now the devotees from Gaud have all gone. Kindly accept my invitation for *bhiksa* for a month." Mahaprabhu said, "No, that would be against my Sannyas-dharma." Sarvabhaum said, "Then kindly accept *bhiksa* for at least twenty days." Mahaprabhu said, "No, that is also not possible." Sarvabhaum went on repeating his request for *bhiksa* with reduced number of days, till Mahaprabhu had to agree to accept *bhiksa* for five days.⁷²

For five days Mahaprabhu dined at the house of Sarvabhaum. Sarvabhaum's wife, usually called Shathi's mother, after the name of her daughter Shathi, was an expert cook. She was also a great devotee and had motherly affection for Mahaprabhu. Every day she cooked a great variety of choicest dishes for Mahaprabhu. Sarvabhaum also helped her in cooking. On the first day Mahaprabhu went to their house for *bhiksa*, he was surprised to see the variety of food cooked and offered to Krishna. He said, "I wonder how you could cook so many things in only two

⁷¹ *ibid*, 179 - 182.

⁷² *ibid*, 84 - 90.

praharas (six hours). Even if a hundred cooks cooked on hundred ovens they would not have been able to cook so much in so short a time. The supernatural odour of the *prasad* indicates that Radha-Krishna have eaten it with relish. It is my good fortune that I shall eat their *prasad*. But please remove the *asan*⁷³ and the pots in which *bhog* was served to Krishna. Give me a different *asan* and *prasad* in different pots, because Krishna's *asan* and the pots in which He ate are objects of worship.”⁷⁴

Sarvabhaum said, “Prabhu! If you can eat Krishna's *prasad*, why can't you sit on His *asan* and eat in His pots? They are also His *prasad*.”⁷⁵

Mahaprabhu laughed and said, “You are right. The Shastras say Krishna's devotees can use as Krishna's *prasad* everything used by Him.” He sat on Krishna's *asan* and ate in His pots the *bhog* served to Him.”⁷⁶

Mahaprabhu said, “Bhatt! This *prasad* is too much. Give me only a little.”

Bhattcharya said, “Prabhu! In Nilachal You (as Jagannath) eat heaps of food served to you fifty-two times during the day. In Dvarka You eat all the food offered to You by Your sixteen thousand queens. In Vraj at the time of Govardhan-yajna You ate mountains

⁷³ Seat made of wood or Kush grass.

⁷⁴ *ibid*, 232.

⁷⁵ *ibid*, 233.

⁷⁶ C. C., 2, 15, 234.

of food offered to You by the *gopas* and *gopis*. The *prasad* now served to You is not even a morsel in comparison to what You eat at other places.”⁷⁷

Mahaprabhu laughed and started eating.

Sarvabhaum's son-in-law Amogh, to whom his daughter Shathi was married, was always critical of Sadhus and Sannyasis. Sarvabhuam was afraid that if he came and saw Mahaprabhu eating, he might pass some unpleasant remarks. Therefore he sat outside the house with a staff in hand to prevent him from coming while Mahaprabhu ate. This all the more aroused the curiosity of Amogh and he waited outside in hiding for an opportunity to peep in. He did peep in once, when Sarvabhaum went in to serve Mahaprabhu. Looking at the food served to Mahaprabhu he said, “My God! This Sannyasi alone eats as much as would be sufficient to feed ten or twelve people to their fill.”⁷⁸

Mahaprabhu laughed to hear this. But Sarvabhaum ran after Amogh with the staff in hand. Shathi's mother began to curse him with death. Amogh fled. Mahaprabhu tried to pacify them. For their satisfaction he ate to his fill. Sarvabhaum garlanded him and made obeisance and went with him up to his place to see him off. There he apologized to him for the remarks of his son-in-law with folded hands and tears flowing from his eyes. Mahaprabhu tried to console him by

⁷⁷ *ibid*, 236 - 240.

⁷⁸ *ibid*, 242 - 245.

saying, "You need not bother about what Amogh said. His remarks were casual. They were not made in the spirit of finding fault or slandering me."

Sarvabhaum returned home. But there was no peace for him. He said to his wife, "I have with my ears heard my own son-in-law slandering Mahaprabhu. I can atone for this sin only by killing my son-in-law. The Shastras do not permit this. Therefore I shall ask Shathi also to renounce him, because he is fallen and the Shastras enjoin that a lady should renounce her husband, if he falls."⁷⁹

No one knew where Amogh fled the same night. The next morning he was attacked by cholera. When Sarvabhaum came to know about this, he was happy. He said, "The Lord has fulfilled my wish. He has punished him immediately for the offense he committed."⁸⁰

That day, when Gopinath Acharya went to Mahaprabhu for his *darshan*, Mahaprabhu inquired about Sarvabhaum. Gopinath said, "Sarvabhaum and his wife have been fasting. Amogh has been attacked by cholera." Immediately Mahaprabhu went to Amogh with Gopinath. He placed his hand upon his chest and said, "Amogh! Wake up and say 'Krishna'." Amogh got up, saying 'Krishna, Krishna' and began to dance. Tears, horripilation and tremor appeared on his body.

⁷⁹ *ibid*, 257 - 261.

⁸⁰ *ibid*, 262 - 264.

Mahaprabhu laughed to see him. He held Mahaprabhu's feet and said, "Prabhu! Forgive me for slandering you with this mouth." As he said this he began to slap his mouth right and left. He went on slapping till his cheeks became red. Gopinath Acharya then held his hands and did not let him slap himself any more. Mahaprabhu assuaged him by saying, "Amogh, I love you, because you are related to Sarvabhaum. I love not only you, but also his servants and maid-servants and even his dog. Now forget that you have ever committed any offence and chant the name of Krishna."⁸¹

Mahaprabhu then went to Sarvabhaum. Sarvabhaum made obeisance to him. He embraced him and said, "Amogh is a child. He is not at fault. Why be angry with him and why fast? Take your bath, have the *darshan* of Jagannath and eat. I shall remain here until I see you eating." Sarvabhaum said, "Amogh was dying. Why did you not let him die? He does not deserve to live."⁸²

Mahaprabhu said, "Amogh is your child. You should wish him well. He has now become a Vaishnav. You should be kind to him."⁸³

Sarvabhaum said, "Prabhu! You go to Jagannath for *darshan*. I shall also go there soon after bathing."

⁸¹ *ibid*, 267 - 278.

⁸² *ibid*, 284.

⁸³ *ibid*, 285 - 286.

Mahaprabhu said to Gopinath, "You stay here. After Sarvabhaum has taken *prasad* let me know."

Mahaprabhu then went to Jagannath. Sarvabhaum took *prasad* after bathing and having the *darshan* of Jagannath.

Amogh became a devotee. He always chanted the name of Krishna and danced.⁸⁴

THE NEXT RATHAYATRA

Every year at the time of Rathayatra the devotees from Gaud went to Nilachal under the leadership of Advaitcharya. They had to walk on foot continually for 25 days. But as soon as they saw Mahaprabhu their fatigue disappeared. They shouted 'Prabhu, Prabhu!' and began to roll at his feet. He lifted and embraced each one of them. A tidal wave of bliss rose high in their hearts. As if automatically their *khol-karatals* began to sound and their feet began to move. They danced in ecstasy. Mahaprabhu with his own hands offered *prasadi* garlands of Jagannath to them.

At the time of the next Rathayatra the wives of Advaitcharya, Srivas, Shivanand Sen and some other ladies also accompanied the devotees to Nilachal.⁸⁵ As before the devotees enjoyed with Mahaprabhu Gundicha Marjan and the other ceremonies of Jagannath. At the time of their departure Mahaprabhu

⁸⁴ *ibid*, 290.

⁸⁵ C. C., 2, 16, 20 23.

said to Nityanand, "Sripad! I beseech that you do not come to Nilachal every year. You should constantly devote yourself to the task of setting the people of Gaud on the path of *bhakti* and bring about their deliverance. You alone are competent to do this, no one else."⁸⁶

Nityanand said, "Prabhu! I am drawn to you, because I am the body, you are the soul. The very fact that I am drawn proves this."⁸⁷

JAGANNATH'S MERCY ON PUNDARIK VIDYANIDHI

The devotees went back to Gaud, but Pundarik Vidyanidhi remained. He was staying with his old friend Svarup Damodar. One day when he went to the temple of Jagannath, he saw Him wearing unwashed starched cloth, which is regarded as impure. He was surprised. He said to Svarup, "Svarup! In your Nilachal do you not observe the rules and regulations regarding purity and impurity? You make Jagannath wear unwashed starched clothes."

Svarup said, "Vidyanidhi! This is Jagannath's own *dham*. The ways of worship etc. here are independent of the Shastras. Every thing here is according to the sweet will of Jagannath. Every thing in the *dham* is pure. If you talk here of purity and impurity and the

⁸⁶ *ibid*, 62 - 64.

⁸⁷ *ibid*, 65 - 66.

rules and regulations of the Shastras, you commit an offense."

The orthodox Brahmin could not swallow this. It kept gnawing him at heart. At night he saw a dream. Jagannath came to him with Balaram. Both the brothers began to slap him on his cheeks.⁸⁸ He fell at their feet and said, "Pray forgive. Pray tell me what offense I have committed?"

"Offense! There is no limit to your offense. You came to know on coming here that neither I nor my devotees have any caste. Then why do you stay here? Why not go back to your home to save your caste? According to my own dispensation my devotees make me wear new starched cloth on the Udana-shashti day. Still you had the courage to find fault with my devotees."

Vidyanidhi wept and said, "Prabhu! Forgive me. You have rightly punished the face that laughed at your devotees."⁸⁹

Then Prabhu said lovingly, "Vidyanadhi! You are My devotee. My punishment to you is My mercy."⁹⁰

The next day, when Svarup saw Vidyanidhi, he said, "Vidyanidhi! What is this? Your face is red and swollen." Vidyanidhi told him all about the dream.

⁸⁸ C. Bh., 3, 10, 128 - 129.

⁸⁹ *ibid*, 137 - 138.

⁹⁰ *ibid*, 140.

Then he said, "Svarup! How disgraceful! How can I go out with this face? What will people say?"

Svarup was overwhelmed with *bhav*. His body was filled with horripilation. Tears coursed down his cheeks. He said in a voice choked with emotion, "Vidyanidhi! You are fortunate. This punishment is not ordinary. Is this punishment or mercy? No one will get this punishment unless Prabhu regards him as his own. Prabhu has punished you, because He regards you as His own."

CHAPTER XXIII

VISIT TO GAUD

Ever since Mahaprabhu returned from the South he had been desiring to go to Vrindavan. But Sarvabhaum and Ramnand requested him to postpone the visit on some pretext or the other. He could not disregard the wishes of his dear devotees. Two years passed like this. The third year he embraced them and said entreatingly, "I have keenly desired to go to Vrindavan, but I could not during the last two years on account of your insistence to postpone the visit for some reason or the other. I must now go, but I cannot without your consent. You should happily give me your consent. I shall go via Gaud, so that I see my mother and the Ganga."²

Sarvabhaum and Ramnand did not think it proper to detain Mahaprabhu any more. They said that he might go after the rainy season on the Vijaya-dashami day. So he started for Vrindavan along with his devotees on Vijaya-dashami.³ He went to Bhavanipur,

¹ C. C., 2, 16, 83 - 84.

² *Ibid*, 87 - 89.

³ *Ibid*, 92.

Bhuvaneshvar and Cuttack. In Cuttack he had the *darshan* of Saksigopal and rested for some time in a garden outside the city. Ramnand informed Raja Prataparudra of the arrival of Mahaprabhu in Cuttack. Prataparudra was happy to know that he had come to his capital. He went to him at once. Again and again he lay prostrate before him in obeisance. Tears incessantly flowed from his eyes, his body trembled and hairs stood on end on account of *bhav*. Mahaprabhu was pleased to see him.

From Cuttack Mahaprabhu had to cross the Chitrotpala river. Prataparudra asked Harichandan and Mardaraj, his two ministers to arrange quickly for a new boat to carry Mahaprabhu to the other side of the river. He also asked them to arrange for his comfortably staying in houses newly built for him in all the places in his kingdom through which he had to pass. He asked Ramnand to accompany him and look after his comfort.⁴

The queens and the other ladies of the royal family were anxious to have the *darshan* of Mahaprabhu. This was not possible, because Mahaprabhu strictly followed the Shastras forbidding a Sannyasi to grant audience to ladies. Prataparudra made special arrangements to enable them to see Mahaprabhu without being seen by him. Mahaprabhu was to leave Cuttack in the evening. He stationed a row of elephants by the side of the path through which Mahaprabhu was to go. On

⁴ *Ibid*, 2, 16, 109 - 115.

the elephants sat the ladies inside small tent-houses. Through the holes in the tent they saw Mahaprabhu going on his way singing and dancing with his companions. Krishnadas Kaviraj says that they were blessed with Krishna-*prem* merely by seeing him from a distance and started chanting 'Krishna, Krishna!' and shedding tears of love from their eyes.⁵

THE PLIGHT OF GADADHAR

When Mahaprabhu reached the bank of Chitrotpala, he saw that Gadadhar was accompanying him, though he had asked him not to leave Nilachal. Mahaprabhu asked him to return to Nilachal, because he had taken *ksetra-sannyas*.⁶

Gadadhar said, "Let Nilachal go to hell. For me wherever you are there is Nilachal."

Mahaprabhu said, "You are serving Gopinath. Remain here to serve Him."

Gadadhar said, "No service is equal to the service of your lotus-feet. By serving you all other services are automatically performed."

Mahaprabhu said, "If you leave the service of Gopinath and go with me, I shall commit an offense by causing disturbance in the service of Gopinath. Therefore, if you want my happiness you should not go with me."

⁵ C. C., , 16, 116 - 120.

⁶ Vow not to leave a *ksetra* or *dham*.

"I shall not go with you," said Gadadhar. "I shall go alone to see mother Shachi. The responsibility for leaving the service of Gopinath and giving up *kestra-sannyas* shall entirely be mine." As he said this, he started going independently.⁷

Mahaprabhu was inwardly pleased by the devotion of Gadadhar, but outwardly he expressed anger.⁸ He held his hand and said, "Gadadhar! You are for your happiness causing unhappiness to me. I feel pained to see that you are giving up the service of Gopinath and *ksetra-sannyas* on account of me. You must now go back to Nilachal and not say anything further unless you want seriously to hurt me."⁹ Mahaprabhu said this and stepped into the boat. Gadadhar fell senseless on the ground. Mahaprabhu asked Sarvabhaum to take him to Nilachal.¹⁰

On reaching Yajapur Mahaprabhu sent back Harichandan and Mardaraj. Ramnand remained with him. Mahaprabhu passed day and night in Krishna-katha with Ramnand. At every stoppage on the way he stayed in a house specially built for him. The servants of Raja Prataparudra and the people of the place brought different kinds of food in large quantity to serve him and his companions.¹¹

⁷ *Ibid*, 129 - 135.

⁸ *Ibid*, 137.

⁹ *Ibid*, 137 - 140.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 141 - 142.

¹¹ C. C., 2, 16, 149 - 150.

MERCY ON THE MUSLIM RAJA

When Mahaprabhu reached Oriya-Cuttack at the border of Orissa, the officer stationed there served him heartily for a few days. Then he said, "Prabhu! The region on the other side of the river is ruled by a drunkard Muslim Raja. He is feared by the people, who want to cross the river. If you must go to Gaud, I would request that you kindly wait for some time. Let me try to enter into a treaty with the Raja before you cross the river."¹²

At this time came to Oriya-Cuttack a Hindu spy of the Muslim Raja. He went back to report, "A Sannyasi has come from Jagannath Puri. Many Siddha saints have come with him. They always do *Sankirtan*, dance, laugh and weep. Lacs of people go to see him. After seeing him they cannot go back. They also begin to laugh and weep, and dance and roll on the ground. It is a scene, which cannot be described. He knows who has seen. It seems that the Sannyasi is not an ordinary Sannyasi. He is God" After saying this the spy himself began to chant 'Hari, Hari' and dance and sing and laugh and weep like one who had gone mad."¹³

This aroused curiosity in the mind of the Muslim Raja. He became anxious to see Mahaprabhu. He sent his confidant to the officer on duty in Oriya-Cuttack

¹² *Ibid*, 151 - 152.

¹³ *Ibid*, 161 - 166.

with the proposal of a treaty to enable him to go there and have the *darshan* of Mahaprabhu.¹⁴ The officer was surprised. He understood that Mahaprabhu had turned the mind of the drunkard Raja.¹⁵ He said to him, "The Raja is fortunate. He can come without any weapons and with only five or six men and have his *darshan*."¹⁶

The Muslim Raja thought it improper to go to Mahaprabhu in Muslim dress. He put on Hindu dress and went. He prostrated himself before Mahaprabhu from a distance with tears in his eyes. Then going near he stood before him with folded hands and said, "I am unfortunate to have been born a Muslim. If I were born a Hindu, I would have attained the service of your lotus feet."¹⁷ Mahaprabhu assured him of his mercy and asked him to chant "Krishna Hari." He said, "Since you have kindly accepted me as your servant, permit me to do some service in atonement for the sins I have committed by killing Brahamins, cows and the Vaishnavs."¹⁸

Mukund Dutt said, "Mahaprabhu wants to go to the bank of Ganga. If you make proper arrangements for his journey that would be a great service."

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 169 - 171.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 172 - 173.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 174 - 175.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 177 - 180.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 185 - 186.

The Muslim Raja went back happily. The next morning he sent his confidant to bring Mahaprabhu and his companions on a beautifully decorated new boat with a house on it. He himself accompanied them to Gaud with soldiers on ten other boats to protect the party from pirates. He went with them up to Pichalda. At Pichalda he bade farewell to Mahaprabhu with tears in his eyes. Mahaprabhu went on the same boat to Panihati.¹⁹

TRAVELS IN GAUD: MEETING RUPA-SANATAN

As soon as Mahaprabhu reached Panihati, the news of his arrival spread all round. People began to flock in lacs for his *darshan*. Whether in water or on land every inch of space was occupied by people anxious to have a glimpse of him. Raghav Pandit came and took him to his home in Panihati. The next day he went to Kumarahatta, where Srinivas lived. From there he went to Shivanand Sen's house and the house of Vasudev Dutt. Then he went to the house of Vidyavachaspati, the brother of Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya in Vidyanagar. From Vidyanagar he went to Kuliya, where lived Devanand Pandit. We have already described how he was chastised by Mahaprabhu for misbehaving with Srivas at the time of his *Bhagavat path* and how he showed mercy on him during his visit to Gaud after Sannyas. In Kuliya Mahaprabhu lived at the house of

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 191 - 199.

Madhav Das for seven days and showed mercy on thousands of people. From there he went to the house of Advaitcharya in Shantipur, where Shachi Ma was waiting to see her dear son after a long time and set her heart at peace.²⁰

From Shantipur Mahaprabhu went to Ramkeli, a village near the capital of Gaud. There lived Rupa and Sanatan, two brothers, who served under the King Husain Shah of Gaud. Sanatan, who was the elder, was Sakar Mallik (Prime Minister) of Hassain Shah and Rupa his Dabir Khas (private secretary). Both the brothers were well-versed in the Shastras and great devotees of Krishna. But they had to serve the Muslim King under compulsion. They had written to Mahaprabhu and asked what they should do. Mahaprabhu had advised them to remain in the service of the King until Krishna was pleased to relieve them, but to keep their minds always set on Krishna.

When Mahaprabhu reached Ramkeli with lacs of people accompanying him, Husain Shah got suspicious. He sent his spy Keshav Ksattri to collect information about them. Keshav Khattri apprehended persecution of Mahaprabhu and his party at the hands of Husain Shah. Therefore instead of telling him anything about his true personality, he said, "He is an ordinary Sannyasi and a beggar. Some people come to see him. There is no cause for any kind of suspicion against

²⁰ C. C., 2, 16, 200 - 207.

him. His persecution instead of doing any good may prove harmful.”²¹ Husain Shah was not satisfied. He asked Rupa to tell him all about the Sannyasi. Rupa did not hide anything. He said, “He is no other than the Lord Himself, Who has made you King. You are fortunate, because He has come to your kingdom. His visit augurs well for you and your kingdom. You need not ask me about Him. You are a king and the king is a part and parcel of Vishnu. You ask yourself. What does your own mind say about Him?”²² Husain Shah said, “I think He is God and no one else.”²³

From what Husain Shah had heard about Mahaprabhu, he had already concluded that He was God. He thought that a Sannyasi did not have anything to give to anyone. Still lacs and lacs of people followed Him. How could this happen, if He did not have the divine power to attract people? He had therefore asked his Muslim officers not to do any harm to him and to let Him freely move about in Gaud as he pleased.”²⁴ Any doubt that had cropped up in his mind on account of what he was told by his Muslim subjects seemed now to have gone.

On returning home Rupa conferred with his brother. Both decided to meet Mahaprabhu in secret. At dead of night they disguised themselves as ordinary

²¹ C. C., 2, 1, 162 - 163.

²² *Ibid*,

²³ *ibid*, 166 - 170.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 160.

beggars and went. They lay prostrate before him. Mahaprabhu blessed them. They said with throat choked with emotion and tears profusely running out of their eyes. "Prabhu! We are the lowest creatures on earth. We serve a Muslim Raja, who is the killer of Brahmins and the cows. You have vowed to deliver all lowly persons. You have delivered sinners like Jagai and Madhai. We know that we are a thousand times more sinful and fallen. We do not deserve your mercy. Still we pray for it, because we know that it is limitless and flows freely towards all, whether deserving or undeserving."²⁵

Mahaprabhu said, "Listen Dabir Khas and Sakar Mullick. You are both my old servants. From today you will be called Rupa and Sanatan.²⁶ I have come to Gaud for no other purpose except that of seeing you. No one knows this. No one understands why I have come to Ramkeli. You have done well to come. I am pleased to see you. Now go back home and be at peace. You will soon be delivered by Krishna." So saying he put his benedictory hand on their heads. They bent low and put his foot upon their heads. Mahaprabhu embraced them.²⁷

While leaving Sanatan said to Mahaprabhu humbly, "Prabhu! It is better that you move away from here. It is true that Husain Shah has regard for you. But

²⁵ C. C., 2, 1, 175 - 193.

²⁶ C. C., 2, 1, 94 - 97.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 198 - 03.

he is after all a Muslim. No one can say when his mind may change." Then he added prayerfully, "Besides Prabhu, lacs and lacs of people are following you. It is not proper to go on pilgrimage with a crowd."²⁸

The next day Mahaprabhu left Ramkeli and went to Kanai Natashala. At night he began to think, "What Sanatan said is right. My visit to Vrindavan will not be fruitful, if I go with a crowd." But the crowd would not leave him. Therefore he decided to again go to Shantipur and return from there to Nilachal, so that he might some day start secretly from there for Vrindavan. The next morning he went to Shantipur.

MERCY ON RAGHUNATH

Mahaprabhu stayed in Shantipur at the house of Advaitcharya for a week. During this period Raghunath, the heir-apparent of Saptagram came and met him. Saptagram was a flourishing town of Gaud during the days of Mohammadan rulers. Husain Shah had leased out the town and adjoining villages to two influential Kayasth chiefs—Hiranya and Goverdhan. They ruled over the territory more or less as independent rulers, who paid a tax of 12 lac Rupees a year to the emperor.²⁹

²⁸ *Ibid*, 208 - 210.

²⁹ C. C., 2, 16, 215.

Hiranya had no issue. Raghunath was the only child of Goverdhan. When Raghunath was only 8 or 10 years old, it became apparent that he was made differently from his father and uncle and that he would pursue a line different from the one they had chalked out for him. He used to hear from his servants, maid-servants and the distinguished persons, who visited the court of his father, about the supernatural personality of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. His picture was already firmly printed on his mind. He was anxious to meet him and surrender himself wholly at his feet. When news came that Mahaprabhu had taken Sannyas and was staying at the house of Advaitcharya, he became restless to meet him. He asked for permission from his father and uncle to go to Shantipur. They were apprehensive that if he came under the influence of Mahaprabhu, they might lose him for ever. But they thought it imprudent to stop him from going. They sent him under the escort of some Brahmans, friends and a number of pike-men.

On reaching Advaitcharya's house Raghunath fell at the feet of Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu placed his foot upon his head, then lifted and embraced him. Hiranya and Goverdhan were intimate with Advaitcharya and served him.³⁰ Therefore Advaitcharya made proper arrangements for Raghunath's stay in his house. Raghunath stayed there happily for about a week. Mahaprabhu won his heart and soul by giving him his

³⁰ *Ibid*, 223.

company, his love and his *mahaprasad* and bade him go.³¹ He went back sobbing and weeping.

Raghunath returned home, but he was mad after Mahaprabhu.³² He wanted to fly to Nilachal. He made several attempts to flee, but each time he was caught and brought back. His father appointed five pike-men, four servants and two Brahamins to keep a watch on him always and prevent him from flying.³³ He also married him to a beautiful and accomplished girl in the hope that the bond of her love would prevent him from flying. Marriage also proved futile.

Now when Mahaprabhu came to Shantipur for the second time, Raghunath said to his guardians, "Permit me to go to see Mahaprabhu. If you do not, take it as certain that I will not survive."³⁴ They had to send him under the protection of a number of bodyguards and Brahamins.

Raghunath had been weeping in separation from Mahaprabhu now for more than four years. As soon as he saw Mahaprabhu, he fell at his feet and burst into tears. He tried to stop weeping, but could not. Mahaprabhu caressed him lovingly and assuaged him by his sweet words.

Raghunath lived with him for a week. All the time he said to him prayerfully in his mind, "Prabhu!

³¹ *Ibid*, 224.

³² *Ibid*, 225.

³³ *Ibid*, 226.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 230.

Release me from the hands of the bodyguards and the watchmen and take me along with you to Nilachal. It is now impossible for me to live in separation from you. You have incarnated for the deliverance of the fallen souls. How long would you remain indifferent to a fallen soul like me?"³⁵

Mahaprabhu could peep into his heart. He knew that Raghunath was his eternal associate and he had to come out of the world to assist him in his Lila. But for some reason he wanted him to live in the world for some time more. He said to him, "Ragunath! Do not be crazy. Be calm and go home. You can't cross the ocean of the world by a leap. One has to swim across it slowly. You perform your duties in the world, without being attached to the world and always keeping your mind at the lotus-feet of Krishna. Krishna would soon be merciful to you. When I return from Vrindavan, you come to Nilachal by some ruse or trick. What ruse you will use Krishna will Himself inspire in your heart. Who can hold a person, who had the mercy of Krishna?"³⁶

Raghunath took Mahaprabhu's advice to heart. He felt greatly relieved by his kind assurance. When he reached home his guardians were agreeably surprised to see him happily participate in the affairs of the family and the state.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 232 -233.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 234 - 239.

RETURN TO NILACHAL

Shachi Ma was there at the house of Advaitcharya as long as Mahaprabhu stayed there. Mahaprabhu took leave of her, Advaitcharya and Nityanand to go back to Nilachal. He asked his devotees not to go to Nilachal that year, because they had already met him in Gaud and because he wanted soon to go to Vrindavan.³⁷

On his arrival in Nilachal there were tumultuous scenes of joy everywhere. Kashi Misra, Ramnand, Sarvabhaum, Gadadhar, Shikhi, Baninath and the other devotees all came to see him. Mahaprabhu embraced them all. He told them that he could not go to Vrindavan on account of the crowd that had accompanied him and requested them to make arrangements so that he might go quietly alone.

Gadadhar said, "Prabhu! Where you live there is Vrindavan. There are Ganga, Yamuna and all the Tirthas. But you go to Vrindavan to teach the importance of Vrindavan to people by your example. You will go there according to your wish. Who can prevent you? But Chaturmas is ahead. We would request that you go after Chaturmas is over." Others said the same and it was decided that he would go to Vrindavan after Chaturmas.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 245.

CHAPTER XXIV

JOURNEY TO VRINDAVAN

As soon as the winter season arrived Mahaprabhu became restless to go to Vrindavan. He took Svarup and Ramanand aside in seclusion and said to them, "I now want to go to Vrindavan alone through the forests of Jharikhand. I can do so only if you assist me. I shall quietly sneak out of Nilachal one night. You must see that no one else knows about it and no one follows me."

They said, "Prabhu! You are the master of your will and will do what you choose. But we have one request. We shall be happy if you take with you Balabhadra Bhattacharya, who came with you from Gaud and his Brahamin servant. Balabhadra is a learned Brahmin. He is saintly and has a loving heart. He will do *bhiksa* for you and his servant will carry your clothes and *kamandalu*."¹

IN THE FOREST OF JHARIKHAND

Mahaprabhu agreed. One night he started for the journey with Balabhadra Bhattacharya and his servant.

¹ C. C., 2, 17, 10 - 18.

Instead of going by the main road, he went secretly through a by-pass and entered the forest of Jharikhand. The forest was full of wild animals like lions, tigers, elephants, bears and pigs. Bhattacharya was frightened to see them. But Mahaprabhu went chanting "Krishna, Krishna." He was lost completely within himself. The animals saw him and left his path by themselves.²

One day a miracle happened. As Mahaprabhu was going, he was completely lost within himself. Balabhadra was following him. He saw a lion lying on the path of Mahaprabhu only at a little distance from him. He was scared beyond limit. He thought, "Mahaprabhu has no outward consciousness. He would soon stumble over it. Then God knows what will happen." Mahaprabhu actually stumbled over the lion. This aroused his outward consciousness. He said, "Krishna, Krishna." The lion immediately got up and began to dance, saying, "Krishna, Krishna."³

No wonder, the lion's *karmas* were destroyed and the bonds of Maya cut asunder by the touch of Mahaprabhu's feet and by hearing the name 'Krishna' chanted by Mahaprabhu. His soul, though still in the body of the lion was free. Therefore it was natural for him to chant the name of Krishna and dance.

Another day, when Mahaprabhu was bathing in a river, a group of elephants came to drink water.

² C. C., 1, 17, 23 - 26.

³ C. C., 1, 17, 27 - 28.

Mahaprabhu said “Krishna, Krishna” and sprinkled water on them. Their *karmas* were also destroyed and they began to chant the name of Krishna and roar and roll on the ground in *Krishna-prem*.⁴ Bhattacharya was surprised to see what he would have otherwise thought was impossible and unbelievable.

But Bhattacharya was completely stupefied, when he saw another scene one day. Mahaprabhu was singing *Harinam* aloud as he went. His sweet voice attracted some deer and does. They flanked Mahaprabhu on either side and began to walk with him. Mahaprabhu caressed them lovingly and recited a *Slok*. Then came five or seven lions. The lions and the deer and does walked together with Mahaprabhu. On seeing them walking together Mahaprabhu was reminded of Vrindavan. He began to recite a *Slok* from *Srimad Bhagavat* (Bh.10, 13, 60), describing how greed, anger and animosity etc. do not find a place in Vrindavan and even men and animals inemically disposed towards each other by nature live together and love each other. He then said to them, “Say Krishna, Krishna.” The animals said, “Krishna, Krishna” and began to dance. The lions and the deer started embracing each other and kissing each other. Mahaprabhu laughed to see them.⁵

Kaviraj Gosvami says, “Mahaprabhu’s *darshan* filled peacocks and the other birds with *Krishna-prem*

⁴ *Ibid*, 29 - 32,

⁵ C. C., 2, 17, 33 - 40.

and they started chanting "Krishna" and dancing in ecstasy. Mahaprabhu's shouts of "haribol!" filled the trees and creepers and all the animate and inanimate beings of Jharikhand with Krishna-*prem*. The people of every village, through which Mahaprabhu went, were blessed with Krishna-*prem* merely by seeing him or hearing him chant "Krishna". Such was the power of the Name heard from his mouth that not only the person, who heard it was blessed, anyone, who heard it from him was blessed with Krishna-*prem* and started chanting the Name and dancing. In this way the chain went on and all the persons of the locality, through which he passed, were blessed with Krishna-*prem*. In the same way in which he had blessed the people of Bengal, Orissa and the South, he blessed the tribals, who lived in the forests of Jharikhand. His journey to Vrindavan was but a pretext for their deliverance.⁶

ON THE WAY TO MATHURA

After crossing Jharikhand Mahaprabhu went on towards Mathura. He was always charged with *bhav* of Vrindavan and had little outward consciousness. Any forest that he saw on his way he regarded as the forest of Vrindavan; any hill that he saw, he regarded as Govardhan; any river that he saw he regarded as Yamuna. He danced in ecstasy and wept in love to

⁶ C. C., 2, 17, 41 - 51.

see them.⁷ In the villages that lay on the way, the village-folks brought provisions, which Bhattacharya cooked for Mahaprabhu. In the forest that lay on the way Bhattacharya cooked food from the fruits, vegetables and edible leaves etc that he could find there. Mahaprabhu liked the forest food very much.⁸

Mahaprabhu reached Kashi (Varanasi). At noon he bathed in the Ganga, near Manikarnika-ghat. Tapan Misra, who was also bathing in the Ganga, was surprised to see Mahaprabhu. He fell at his feet and began to weep. Mahaprabhu lifted and embraced him. After Mahaprabhu had had the *darshan* of Vishveshvar and Bindumadhava, he took him to his home for *bhiksa*. He could not contain his happiness on finding Mahaprabhu at his home and began to dance.

After Mahaprabhu had eaten and was resting there came Chandrashekhar, his old devotee, who lived in Kashi. He fell at his feet and wept and said, "Prabhu! On account of our past *karmas* we live here in this city of Mayavadi Sannyasis. We do not hear anything except talks about Brahman and Maya. I hear Krishna-katha only from Tapan. Both of us always thought of you and pined and prayed for your *darshan*. You are omniscient. You have kindly responded to our prayer. We hear that you will go to Vrindavan. We pray that you live here at least for a few days and bless us

⁷ *Ibid*, 52 - 53.

⁸ *Ibid*, 54 - 58.

with⁹ your company and the service of your lotus feet.” Tapan said, “Prabhu! I pray that as long as you live here, you have *bhiksa* at my place and no where else.”¹⁰ Mahaprabhu had to comply. He lived in Kashi for ten days.¹¹

MAHAPRABHU IGNORES PRAKASHANAND

There lived in Kashi the famous Mayavadi Sannyasi Prakashanand. He taught Vedanta to his numerous disciples. One day a Maharashtri Brahmin, who had seen Mahaprabhu, went and said to him, “A Sannyasi has come from Jagannath Puri. He is wonderful. I do not know how to describe him. He is tall and well-built. The colour of his body is like pure gold. His arms reach up to the knees. His eyes are beautiful like lotus. He has all the signs, which make him look like Narayan. He always chants the name ‘Krishna’ and tears incessantly flow from his eyes like Ganga. He sometimes laughs and dances, sometimes weeps and sometimes roars like a lion. Whoever sees him begins to chant ‘Krishna’ and dance. His name is Sri Krishna Chaitanya.”¹²

Prakashanand laughed. He said, “Yes. I have heard of a sentimental Sannyasi of Gaud, who is a disciple

⁹ *Ibid*, 87 - 94.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 95.

¹¹ *ibid*, 96.

¹² *ibid*, 102 - 109.

of Keshav Bharati. His name is "Chaitanya." He is a cheat and an imposter. He goes from village to village, dancing and chanting. He has such hypnotic power that anyone, who sees him calls him God. Even learned people like Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya have come under his influence. He is a Sannyasi only by name. He is a big sorcerer. But his jugglery will not work and the 'filth of his sentimentalism' (*bhav-kali*) will not sell here in Kashi. You must not go near him. Instead you should listen Vedant. If you go to him, your fate will be sealed for this world as well as for the next."¹³

The Brahmin was sorry to hear this. With a painful heart he went and reported everything to Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu laughed. The Brahmin then said, "Prabhu! When I see you the words 'Krishna, Hari' automaticaly come out of my mouth. But Prakashanand knew your name. While talking about you thrice he said disrespectfully "Chaitanya, Chaitanya." The name 'Krishna' did not even once come upon his tongue. Would you kindly tell me what is the reason for this?"¹⁴

Mahaprabhu said, "Mayavadi Sannyasis commit offense against Krishna by regarding His form, Lila and attributes as illusory. They always talk of Brahman, Atman and Chaitanya. There is no difference between the Name, Form, Lila and the attributes of Krishna. They are all one and the same. The offense committed

¹³ *ibid*, 111 - 117.

¹⁴ *ibid*, 120 - 124.

against Krishna is offense committed against the Name. Therefore the Name of Krishna does not come upon their tongue. The Name of Krishna is transcendental, like the form, attributes and Lila of Krishna. It cannot be uttered by the tongue, which is mundane. It is self-manifest. It appears on the tongue by itself, when we chant it with faith and devotion.¹⁵ How can it come upon the tongue of a Sannyasi, who does not have faith in Krishna and His Name?

"The Sannyasis regard Brahmanand as the highest end. Brahmanand is but an infinitesimal part of Krishna-lila-rasa, which is perfect in bliss. Therefore the Lila and the attributes of Krishna attract even the Brahma-jnanis, who have realized Brahmanand.¹⁶ Leave aside the Lila and the attributes of Krishna, even the Tulasi offered at the feet of Krishna has the power to conquer their heart and soul.¹⁷

"As for the 'sentimentalism' which I brought here to sell, what shall I do with it, if I do not find any customers for it in Kashi? Shall I take it home? It is a heavy load and I brought it from a long distance. How can I take it back? I shall give it away free."¹⁸

With these words Mahaprabhu assuaged the Brahmin. The next morning he started for Mathura. On reaching Prayag (Allababad) he bathed in the

¹⁵ Bh. R. S. I, 234.

¹⁶ Bh., 1, 7, 10..

¹⁷ Bh., 3, 15, 43.

¹⁸ C. C., 2, 17, 125 - 136.

Triveni, (the confluence of three rivers—Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati). On seeing Yamuna, he was overwhelmed with *prem* and plunged headlong into it. Bhattacharya some how brought him out. He stayed in Prayag for three days, then proceeded onwards. Krishna Das Kaviraj says that on his way to Mathura wherever he went he blessed the people with Krishna-*prem*. Just as during his travels in the South he made everyone Vaishnav, so during his journey to Mathura he made everyone in the West Vaishnav.¹⁹

IN MATHURA

On reaching Mathura Mahaprabhu bathed in Yamuna near Vishramghat. He was overwhelmed with *bhav* to have the *darshan* of the Sri Vigraha of Keshavadev on the birth-place of Sri Krishna. He sang and danced, wept and laughed and roared in *bhav*. A Brahmin fell at his feet. He was also overwhelmed with *prem* and began to dance with him. Both embraced each other and danced with their arms raised, shouting “Hari Hari.” After sometime Mahaprabhu took the Brahmin aside and said, “Vipra! Where did you get this *prem*? ”²⁰

The Vipra replied, “When Madhavendra Puri came to Mathura, he had *bhiksa* at my place and gave me Diksha.” As Mahaprabhu heard this, he made obeisance to the Brahmin. The Brahmin in turn fell at his feet.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 144.

²⁰ Brahmin.

Mahaprabhu said, "You are like my Guru. It does not behoove you to make obeisance to me." The Brahmin said, "You should not say so. But tell me if you have some relationship with Madhavendra Puri. I doubt if anyone can have the kind of *prem* you have without any relationship with him." Balabhadra Bhattacharya told him how Mahaprabhu was related to him through disciplic succession. He was happy to hear this and began to dance with joy. He took Mahaprabhu to his place and gave him *bhiksa* on his own asking. The Brahmin was a Sanorhiya Brahamin. Sannyasis did not take *bhiksa* from the Sanorhiyas. But since Madhavendra Puri had taken *bhiksa* at his house on account of his *prem-bhakti*, he did the same.²¹

Lacs and lacs of people of Mathura came to Mahaprabhu to be blessed by his *darshan*. He came out to give *darshan*. He raised his arms and said, "Say Hari, Hari." The people were charged with Krishna-*prem* to see him and to hear him say "Hari". They started dancing and chanting "Hari, Hari" in ecstasy.²²

The Brahmin took Mahaprabhu round Mathura and showed him the different holy places—Svambhu, Dirgha Vishnu, Mahavidya, Gokarna etc.²³ Then he took him to the forests—Madhuban, Talaban, Kumudaban, and Bahulaban. Mahaprabhu was lost in *bhav* to see the beauty of the trees and the animals of

²¹ *Ibid*, 149 - 170.

²² *Ibid*, 177 - 178.

²³ *Ibid*, 182.

the forests. The animate and inanimate beings of the forests were also overwhelmed with *bhav* to see him. The trees and the creepers shed tears. They bent their branches, laden with fruits and flowers, low at his feet to make their offerings of love.²⁴ Mahaprabhu embraced each tree and creeper and offered its fruits and flowers mentally to Krishna.²⁵ The cows and calves pasturing in the forest ran to Mahaprabhu and surrounded him, and licked his limbs affectionately. They did not want to leave him. It was not without some difficulty that the cowherds could remove them.²⁶ The deer and the does also ran to him on hearing his sweet voice as he went chanting the name of Krishna and started licking his limbs. Mahaprabhu caressed them by softly rubbing their body with his hand.²⁷ He flung his arm round their neck and wept. They also shed tears of love. Horripilation and the other Sattvik-*bhavs* appeared on their body.²⁸ The peacocks with their wings unfurled danced before him as he went, while the cuckoos and the bees sang in symphony to welcome him.²⁹ *Shuka* (parrot) and *Shari* (a singing bird, called *maina*) appeared on the scene. Mahaprabhu desired to hear something from them. They came and sat on his hand and sang the glories of Radha and

²⁴ *Ibid*, 190 - 191.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 194.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 183 - 186.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 187 - 188.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 197.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 189.

Krishna.³⁰ At the same time Mahaprabhu saw the blue coloured neck of the peacock, which reminded him of Krishna and he fell senseless on the ground.³¹ Balabhadra Bhattacharya and the Brahamin chanted aloud the Name of Krishna to bring him back to consciousness.

Krishna Das Kaviraj says that the *prem* Mahaprabhu had in Nilachal increased hundred times, when he was on the way to Mathura. It increased a thousand times on arriving in Mathura and a million times at the time of his wanderings in the forests of Vrindavan.³² This was natural, because in other places only the name of Vrindavan made him dance in *prem*, now when he was in Vrindavan itself, his *prem* was bound to be limitless. Now he always swam in the bottomless ocean of Krishna-*prem*. He had little outward consciousness. His worldly activities like eating, drinking and bathing went on automatically as a matter of habit.³³

Singing and dancing Mahaprabhu reached the village called Arisht. His outward consciousness was suddenly revived to see two rice fields filled with water. Omniscient as he was, he had no difficulty in recognizing them as the ancient Radhakund and

³⁰ *Ibid*, 198 - 199.

³¹ *Ibid*, 204.

³² *Ibid*, 212 - 214.

³³ *Ibid*, 214 - 215.

Shyamkund.³⁴ He bathed in Radhakund, recited Shloks glorifying Radhakund as the *kund* in which Krishna revelled with Radha and Her Sakhis and which imparts Krishna-*prem* like Radha's to anyone, who bathes in it but once.³⁵ He did Tilak with the earth of Radhakund and asked Bhattacharya to collect some earth to be carried to Nilachal.³⁶

From Radhakund Mahaprabhu went to Kusum Sarovar. There he saw Govardhan. He made obeisance to it. He was so maddened with *bhav* that he took one Shila³⁷ of Govardhan, clasped it again and again close to his heart and danced.³⁸ He went to the temple of Haradev in Govardhan village. He sang and danced before Haradev and remained in the temple to rest there at night. On the top of Govardhan hill there was the temple of Gopal, installed and served by Madhavendra Puri. He became restless for the *darshan* of Gopal, but did not know how to have His *darshan*. He could not climb the hill, because it was a manifestation of Krishna Himself and was to be worshipped like Him. His anxiety stirred the heart of Gopal. Gopal thought of a device. He managed to spread the rumour that the Muslims were coming that night to demolish the temple and the image of Gopal

³⁴ C. C., 2, 18, 2 - 4.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 7 - 8.

³⁶ *Ibid*,

³⁷ A piece of stone.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 13.

and to oppress the people of Annapurna village, where the temple was located. Therefore at night the next day the people of the village ran away with the image of Gopal. They secretly installed the image in village Gathuli.³⁹

Next morning Mahaprabhu bathed in Manasaganga and started for the circumambulation of Govardhan. When he reached Govindkund, he heard that Gopal had gone to village Gathuli. He went to Gathuli. He was overwhelmed with *prem-bhav* to see the image of Gopal. He sang and danced before Him the whole day.⁴⁰

For three days continually Mahaprabhu sang and danced before Gopal. On the fourth day, after fulfilling the wish of Mahaprabhu, Gopal went back to his temple. The people carried Him there with shouts of 'Hari, Hari'. Mahaprabhu accompanied them up to the foot of the hill.⁴¹

Krishnadas Kaviraj says that Gopal is so merciful that, if a devotee wants to have His *darshan*, but does not want to climb Govardhan, He comes down Himself on some pretext or the other to give *darshan* to him. Rupa Gosvami once desired to have His *darshan*. Because he also could not climb Govardhan, Gopal came down to Mathura on a similar pretext and lived

³⁹ *Ibid*, 19 - 25.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 30 - 32.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 33 - 35.

for a month in the house of Gosvami Vitthal Nath. Rupa Gosvami also went and stayed in the house of Vitthal Nath for a month and had Gopal's *darshan* everyday.⁴² Sanatan, Raghunath Das, Raghunath Bhatt, Gopal Bhatt, Loka-nath, Bhugarbha, Jiva and several others, who could not climb Govardhan went with Rupa Gosvami and availed themselves of this opportunity of the *darshan* of Gopal.⁴³

After having the *darshan* of Gopal Mahaprabhu went to Kamyavan and Nandishvar. He was overwhelmed with *prem* to see Nandishvar. He bathed in the Pavan-sarovar. Then he went up the hill and asked the people if there was any deity there. They said that there was in a cave there the image of a beautiful child standing in a posture bent at three places and the images of his father and mother standing on either side of Him. Mahaprabhu went to the cave and saw the three images of Krishna, Nand and Yashoda. He was so overwhelmed with *prem* that he touched the different parts of the body of Krishna and sang and danced before Him throughout the day.⁴⁴

He then went to Khadiravan, where he had the *darshan* of Sheshashayi Bhagavan. From there he went to Khela-tirth and Bhandiravan and from there, after crossing the Yamuna to Senvan, Lohavan and Mahavan. At Mahavan he saw Krishna's birthplace and

⁴² *Ibid.* 39 - 47.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 39 - 47.

⁴⁴ C. C., 2, 18, 50 - 57.

was overwhelmed with *bhav*. Then he went to Mathura and stayed with the Sanorhiya Brahamin. He could not stay there long, because of the crowds that came to see him. He went to live in the seclusion of Akrur.⁴⁵

One day he went from Akrur to Vrindavan. He bathed in the Kalihrid and saw Praskandan Tirtha, Keshi Tirth and the Rasasthali, where Krishna danced with the gopis.⁴⁶ On seeing Rasasthali he fell senseless on the ground. On regaining consciousness he rolled on the ground, laughed and wept and sang aloud. In the evening he returned to Akrur.⁴⁷

Next morning he again went to Vrindavan. He bathed near Chira-ghat, where Krishna stole the clothes of the gopis, bathing in Yamuna, and then he went and sat under the old tamarind tree of the time of Krishna-lila and did Nam-sankirtan. At midday he returned to Akrur and had his meal.

Crowds began to gather also at Akrur for his *darshan*. Therefore everyday early in the morning he went to Vrindavan, sat there somewhere in loneliness and performed Nam-sankirtan till noon. In the afternoon he gave *darshan* to people and asked them to do Nam-sankirtan.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 57 - 63.

⁴⁶ Where Krishna danced on the head of the multi-headed cobra Kali.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 64 - 66.

⁴⁸ C. C., 2, 18, 72 - 74.

KRISHNADAS RAJAPUT

One day when Mahaprabhu was chanting Harinam under the tamarind tree, a man came and made obeisance to him. Mahaprabhu said, "Who are you? Where do you live?" He replied, "My name is Krishnadas. I am a Rajput and a householder. I live on the other side of Yamuna. I have for some time been keenly desiring to become a Vaishnav. This morning I saw you in a dream. I am now surprised to see you with open eyes. Mahaprabhu gave him a loving embrace. Immediately he was blessed with Krishna-prem. He began to dance and chant, 'Hari, Hari'. At midday he went to Akrur with Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu gave him his Mahaprashad to eat. From the next morning, after renouncing his family and possessions, he began to live with Mahaprabhu and carry his water-pot wherever he went. The fortunate Rajput did not only become a Vaishnav, but a Vaishnav, who had attained the supreme end of life—the mercy of the Lord, and His eternal company and service.⁴⁹

THE ILLUSION OF THE APPEARANCE OF KRISHNA IN KALIDAH

The rumour was afloat in Mathura that Krishna appeared at Kalidah at night. Crowds of people started going to Kalidah for the *darshan* of Krishna. One day

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 75 - 83.

some people from Mathura went to see Mahaprabhu at Akrur after returning from Kalidah. Mahaprabhu said, "Where do you come from?" They said, "We had gone to see Krishna, Who appears at night in Kalidah. We saw Krishna dancing on the head of Kaliya and a jewel shining on Kaliya's expanded hood. Yes, we saw with our own eyes. There is no doubt about it."⁵⁰ Mahaprabhu laughed and said, "Yes, how can there be any doubt, when you actually saw Him." For three days people continued to go and report to Mahaprabhu like this. Balabhadra Bhattacharya also sought Mahaprabhu's permission to go and see Krishna. Mahaprabhu slapped him and said, "You are a pandit. Don't like a fool be carried away by fools. Krishna does not appear in Kali. You sit at home. But if you cannot restrain yourself, go tomorrow night and see Krishna."⁵¹

The next morning some intelligent people came to Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu said, "Have you had the *darshan* of Krishna?" They replied, "There is no Krishna in Kalidah. It is all an illusion. It is a fisherman, standing in a boat lighted with a lamp, who does fishing in Kalidah at night. From a distance the boat looks like the head of the multifaced Kaliya, the lamp looks like the jewel on his head and the fisherman looks like Krishna dancing on his head."⁵² But though

⁵⁰ C. C., 2, 18, 86 - 87.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 93 - 95.

⁵² *Ibid*, 98 - 99.

the Krishna in Kalidah is an illusion, it is true that Krishna has appeared in Vrindavan and we have seen Him.”

“Where did you see Krishna in Vrindavan?” Mahaprabhu asked.

They replied, “You are the incarnation of Krishna, Who has appeared in Vrindavan and has blessed the people by His *darshan*.⁵³

Mahaprabhu said, “Vishnu, Vishnu! Do not say like that. Never take a *jiva* to be Krishna. One who equates *jiva* with Krishna commits an offense and is punished by Yama.”

They said, “You are not *jiva*, but Krishna. You try to hide Yourself by the golden lustre of Your body, but You cannot. Can the musk be hidden, if it is wrapped in cloth? Whosoever has Your *darshan*, whether a man, woman or a child, a Brahmin or a Chandal, is maddened with Krishna-*prem*. He chants the name of Krishna, laughs and weeps and dances. He becomes an Acharya and delivers thousands of others from bondage. Not to speak of *darshan*, even if one hears Your name, he is blessed with Krishna-*prem*.⁵⁴

One day while Mahaprabhu was sitting on the Akrur-ghat, he began to think, “This is the ghat, where Akrur had the *darshan* of Vaikunth and the Vrajvasis

⁵³ *Ibid*, 102 - 103.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 108 - 115.

saw Golok." As he thought of this, he plunged into the river and could not be seen for some time. Krishnadas and Bhattacharya became anxious about his safety. With great difficulty they brought him out.⁵⁵ After this their anxiety for the safety of Mahaprabhu increased. They secretly conferred with the Sanorhiya Brahamin. Balabhadra Bhattachary said to him, "Today Mahaprabhu drowned in the river in our presence. We brought him out. But he often goes to Vrindavan alone. If he drowns there, who will bring him out? This can happen any day, because his *bhav* is becoming more and more intense. He is always lost in the thought of Krishna and Krishna-lila and is hardly ever conscious of himself. This state is good for him, because it makes him dive deep into the ocean of love and enjoy Krishna-lila. But it may bring disaster to us. He may one day dive so deep into it that he may not come out again."⁵⁶

The Brahaminn said, "You are right. I think he should not stay here any more. He should be taken to Prayag along the bank of Ganga."⁵⁷

Bhattacharya then began to wait for a suitable opportunity to turn Mahaprabhu's mind to the Lord of Nilachal and make him return to Nilachal by way of Prayag and Varanasi. Finding one day that his outward consciousness had revived he said, "Prabhu! I am in

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 126 - 128.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 129 - 131.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 133 - 135.

great distress. I cannot manage the crowd of people, who come to you for *darshan*. When they do not find you here, they pester me a lot, I cannot tell them that you have gone to Vrindavan, because they would then go and disturb you there. A number of people come in the morning everyday to invite you for *bhiksa*. I accept the invitation of only one and have to disappoint and displease the rest. You can deliver me from the crowd by moving towards Prayag along the bank of Ganga. If we move now, we shall reach Prayag well in time to bathe in the Ganga on the auspicious Makar-samkranti day. Besides you have been out of Nilachal for long. Lord Jagannath and your devotees Svarup, Ramanand, Sarvabhaum, and others. must be suffering your separation and anxiously awaiting your arrival there. It is now time to return to Nilachal.”⁵⁸

Though Mahaprabhu did not want to leave Vrindavan, he could not also let his devotee suffer on account of him. He said, “I am greatly indebted to you, because you have showed me Vrindavan. Therefore I will do what you say and go where you take me.”

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 137 - 141.

CHAPTER XXV

RETURN JOURNEY TO NILACHAL

Mahaprabhu started for Prayag. Krishnadas and the Sanorhiya Brahmin, who knew the path of Ganga, accompanied him. They took him along the bank of Ganga. When they had gone some distance, they sat down under a tree to rest. Mahaprabhu was delighted to see many cows pasturing near the tree. Suddenly he heard a cowherd blow the flute. The sound of the flute reminded him of Krishna and he fell senseless on the ground. His breath stopped and foam came out of his mouth.

MERCY ON PATHANS

At that time ten Pathans, riding on horses happened to come. They saw Mahaprabhu and got down from the horses. They thought that Mahaprabhu was a saint, who had with him plenty of gold and the four persons near him were robbers. They had killed him by giving him *datura*¹ and robbed him of the gold. They tied

¹ A poisonous fruit.

them up and wanted to kill them.² Balabhadra Bhattachary and his attendant began to tremble with fear, but not Krishnadas Rajput and the Brahamin. The Brahamin said boldly, "I am not a robber, but a respectable and influential person. I have one hundred men, who are at present in attendance upon the king. The Shikadar³ knows it. Let us go to him. He will tell you who I am. I am a Brahamin of Mathura. This saint is my Guru. He suffers from a disease, on account of which he often becomes unconscious. He will soon regain consciousness. You enquire everything from him, before you do any harm to us."⁴

The Pathans were somewhat cowed down. They said, "Yes, we think that you two Westerners are good and responsible persons. But the two Gaudiyas are robbers. If they are not, why should they tremble?"⁵

Krishnadas said, "You don't know that I live in this village and I am not an ordinary man. I have one hundred Turk soldiers and two hundred cannons. If I shout, my men will come. They will rob you of your horses and everything you have and kill you. It is not the Gaudiyas, who are robbers, but you. You go about robbing the pilgrims and killing them."⁶

² C. C., 2, 18, 150 - 156.

³ Commander-in-chief; a high ranking officer.

⁴ Ibid, 158 - 161.

⁵ Ibid, 162.

⁶ Ibid, 163 - 165.

The Panthans were further cowed down. In the meantime Mahaprabhu regained outward consciousness. He got up with a loud roar and began to dance with his arms raised and shout "Hari, Hari".⁷

The Pathans were frightened. They untied all the four persons. Mahaprabhu could not see them bound.

Bhattacharya calmed Mahaprabhu and made him sit down. The Pathans made obeisance to him and said, "These four persons are robbers. They made you senseless by giving you *dhatura* and robbed you of your wealth."

Mahaprabhu said, "They are not robbers, but my companions. I do not possess anything. I sometimes become unconscious on account of epilepsy. They look after me."⁸

Among the Pathans there was a grave looking person, dressed in black. They called him 'Pir'. He felt influenced by Mahaprabhu and started talking with him on religious topics. He tried to prove that Brahman was formless, but Mahaprabhu shattered all his arguments. At the end he pointed out that the concluding portion of his own Shastra described Brahman as personal. It said that perfect peace and happiness could be achieved only by serving the personal Brahman.

⁷ Ibid, 168.

⁸ Ibid, 173 - 174.

The Pir's mind changed. His heart melted. He fell at Mahaprabhu's feet and said, "On seeing you the Name 'Krishna' automatically comes upon my tongue. My pride of learning is now gone. I have begun to feel that you are yourself Krishna. Kindly have mercy on me. Tell me what I should do to attain the End."⁹

Mahaprabhu said, "You have taken the name of Krishna. All your sins have been destroyed. You have become pure. You need not now do anything. Only chant "Krishna, Krishna".¹⁰

All the Pathans started chanting "Krishna, Krishna". All were blessed with Krishna-*prem*. Mahaprabhu named the Pir 'Ramdas'.¹¹

There was also amongst the Pathans a young prince, whose name was Bijuli Khan. The Pir and the other Pathans were his servants. He said 'Krishna, Krishna' and fell upon Mahaprabhu's feet. Mahaprabhu placed his foot upon his head. He became a great Vaishnav.¹²

The Pathans renounced the world and went about glorifying Mahaprabhu and preaching his religion of love. They were called 'Pathan Vaishnavs'.¹³

When Mahaprabhu reached Soron, he bathed in the Ganga and wanted to bid farewell to Krishna Das

⁹ Ibid, 191, 194.

¹⁰ Ibid, 195 - 196.

¹¹ Ibid, 197.

¹² Ibid, 197 - 202.

¹³ Ibid, 201.

and the Brahmin from Mathura. They said with folded hands, "Prabhu! Let us go with you up to Prayag. We shall not get your *darshan* again." They went with Mahaprabhu up to Prayag.

MEETING RUPA IN PRAYAG

Mahaprabhu stayed at Prayag for ten days. He met Rupa in Prayag. We shall briefly narrate the story of Rupa's renunciation before we describe his meeting with Mahaprabhu and surrender at his feet.

We have already described how Rupa and Sanatan first met Mahaprabhu at Ramkeli in Gaud. After their meeting with him they engaged two Brahamins to do *Purashcharana*¹⁴ with Krishna-mantra with a view to secure their release from the hands of King Husain Shah and go and surrender themselves completely at the feet of Mahaprabhu.¹⁵

After *purashcharana* Rupa sent some of his dependents to Chandradvip and some to Fatehabad.¹⁶ He himself went to Fatehabad on boat with all the wealth he and Sanatan had amassed. He distributed the wealth among his dependents, the Brahamins and Vaishnavs after keeping one fourth of it with trusted

¹⁴ Religious practice calculated to push the Sadhak forward in spiritual life. The most essential part of it is prolonged *japa* of the Mantra of a deity.

¹⁵ C. C., 2, 19, 4.

¹⁶ Bh. R., 1, 648 - 649.

people for emergencies and depositing ten thousand gold *mohurs* with a merchant to be used by Sanatan for securing his release in case he was imprisoned.¹⁷

Soon after arriving in Fatehabad Rupa sent a man to Nilacala to find the whereabouts of Mahaprabhu. He returned with the news that Mahaprabhu had gone to Vrindavan through Jharikhanda. He started for Vrindavan. His younger brother Anupama (Vallabha) accompanied him.

On reaching Prayag he learnt that Mahaprabhu had returned from Vrindavan to Prayag and had at that time gone to the temple of Bindumadhava for *darshan*. He went there and saw him doing dance and *kirtan* in a state of ecstasy and thousands of people dancing and doing *kirtan* with him. Tears of joy and love began to stream out of his eyes. It was not possible for him to go and meet him at that time. He and Anupama went and met him later at the house of a South Indian Brahmanin, where he was invited for *prasad*.

As soon as they made obeisance before Mahaprabhu, he embraced them, reciting the following Shlok from *Itihasa Samuchchaya*:

*"na meabhaktascaturvedi madbhaktah svapachah
priyah/
tasmai deyam tato grahyam sa cha pujyo yatha
hyaham//*

¹⁷ C. C., 2, 19 , 6 - 9.

—Even a Brahman, who has learnt the four Vedas, is not dear to Me, if he is not a *bhakta*. A *bhakta* is dear to Me even if he is the lowest in caste. Give and take from him. Worship him as you worship Me.”¹⁸

With this Shlok he placed his foot on their head and blessed them.¹⁹

Rupa glorified him by reciting the following Shlok, which he composed at the spur of the moment:

*“namo mahabadanyaya krisna-prem pradayate/
krsnaya krsna chaitanya namne gauratvishe
Namh//”*

—Oh Krishna with golden lustre, Whose name is Krishna Chaitanya! O most bountiful Lord, Who distributes Krsna-prem! I bow down to Thee.”²⁰

Mahaprabhu said, “Oh! How merciful is Krishna to have delivered you from the world, the well of doom and destruction. Both of you are so fortunate.” Then he made Rupa sit by his side and enquired about Sanatan. Rupa said, “He has been imprisoned by Husain Shah. He can be delivered only by your mercy.”

Mahaprabhu said, “He has already been delivered Rupa. He will soon be here.”²¹

¹⁸ C. C., 2, 19, 50.

¹⁹ Ibid, 51.

²⁰ C. C., 2, 19, 50-53.

²¹ Ibid, 56-57.

Rupa was happy to hear about Sanatan's deliverance. That day he and Anupama stayed with Mahaprabhu at the house of the Brahmin and partook of Mahaprabhu's *mahaprasad*, offered by him. The next day they went with him to the house of a devotee, who lived on the bank of Triveni.²² The devotee arranged for their lodging in a *kuti* nearby.

MEETING WITH SRIPAD VALLABHACHARYA

At that time there lived Sripad Vallabhacharya, the great Acharya of Vallabha Sampradaya, in Adail, a village at some distance from Triveni. When he learnt about the arrival of Mahaprabhu, he came to invite him and his companions.²³ He was impressed by Rupa Gosvami's *bhav* and the divine lustre with which his face was radiant. When Mahaprabhu introduced Rupa and Anupama to him, he stretched his arms to embrace the two brothers. But they stepped backwards saying, "No, no, Sripad, do not touch us. We are low and sinful and not worthy of being touched by a divine like you."

Mahaprabhu was happy to watch the humility and self-reproachment of Rupa, who was till recently seated on the highest pinnacle of glory and was revered even by the chiefs and chieftans of King Husain Shah of Bengal. He said to Vallachacharya with a smile,

²² The confluence of three rivers – Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati.

²³ C. C., 2, 19, 61, 65.

appreciative of the conduct of the two brothers, "Sripad, you do not touch them. They are too low, not at all worthy of being touched by a high caste Brahmin, and a pious and Vaidic²⁴ person like you."

Vallabhacharya said, "But I see the name of Krishna always on their lips. How can they be low? They are great and superior to everyone else." He recited the following Shlok from Srimad Bhagavatm:

*"aho bata svapacho 'to gariyan
yajjihvagre vartate Nam tubhyam/
te pustepaste juhuvuh sasnurarya
brahmanucurNam grnanti ye te."*

(Bh., 3, 33, 7)

—Indeed, superior to everyone else is the man, who chants Your name, even if he be the lowest in the eyes of the world. He has virtually done all the *tapas*,²⁵ all the sacrifices, all the good deeds and learnt all the Vedas.²⁶

Mahaprabhu was very happy to hear the *Shlok*. Vallabhacharya took Mahaprabhu on a boat to his house in Adaila.²⁷ He was blessed with the vision of Sri Krishna in the body of Mahaprabhu. Therefore he

²⁴ Versed in the Vedas.

²⁵ Penance.

²⁶ C. C., 2 , 19, 71-72.

²⁷ Ibid, 77.

revered Him as Sri Krishna.²⁸ He washed His feet and sprinkled the water in which the feet were washed over his head and the heads of the members of his family and worshipped Him as Sri Krishna. He gave Him to eat food that was not offered to any other deity.²⁹ After He had eaten, he made Him rest and massaged His feet.³⁰

As the news of the arrival of Mahaprabhu spread, thousands of people began to come for His *darshan*. To avoid them he went to Dassvamedh Ghat on the bank of Triveni and began to live there in a *kuti* in a solitary place with Rupa and Anupam.

MAHAPRABHU'S TEACHINGS TO RUPA

In Dasasvamedh Mahaprabhu lived for ten days and taught Rupa the essential principles of *prem-bhakti*. He said, "Rupa! *Bhakti-rasa* is unlimited and indescribable. I can give you only a drop of it. Listen, amongst millions of *jnanis* only one or two become *mukta*. Amongst millions of *muktas* only one or two become *Krishna-bhakta*. *Krishna-bhakta* is totally *nishkama* (without any desire). *Karmi*, *jnani* and *yogi* are not totally *nishkama*. They desire *moksha* and other

²⁸ Gosvami Gokula Natha: *Sri Acharya Ji Mahaprabhu Ki Nijavarta, Gharu Varta-tatha Caurasi Baithakana Ki varta*, Published 1959, Varta, 34, p. 68.

²⁹ Gosvami Gokula Natha: *Sri Acharya Ji Mahaprabhu Ki Nijavarta*.

³⁰ C. C., 2, 19, 85 - 90.

things. Therefore *Krishna-bhakta* is completely *shanta* (peaceful), while the *jnanis*, *karmis* and *yogis* are *ashanta* (without peace).³¹

"*Bhakti* is like a creeper. Some fortunate *jiva* gets its seed with the mercy of the Guru and Sri Krishna. He plants the seed in his heart like a gardener and waters it with the water of *sravana*³² and *kirtan*. The creeper slowly grows. As it grows, it crosses Viraja, Brahma-loka and Vaikunth and reaches Goloka-Vrindavan, where it curls itself round a tree—the wish-fulfilling tree (*kalpataru*) of the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna. There grows on it the fruit of *prem*. The fruit ripens and falls on the ground. The gardener tastes it and is blest. Prema is the highest fruit—*paRam-purashartha* (the highest good).³³

"As, however, the creeper grows, the gardener must take care that the growth of its main branch is not stunted by the growth of the subsidiary branches. The subsidiary branches that grow on the creeper of *bhakti* are the desires for *mukti*, name or fame, or any other thing besides Krishna-*prem*. These must be chopped off as soon as they grow, because *shuddha* or pure *bhakti* consists in devoting mind, body and soul in their entirety to the service of Sri Krishna.³⁴

³¹ Ibid, 148 - 149.

³² Listening to the Name or *lila* of Sri Krishna or discourses on the same.

³³ C. C., 2, 19, 151 - 164.

³⁴ Ibid, 169.

"Also the gardener must protect the creeper from being trampled by an elephant that roams near about. The elephant is *Vaishnav-aparadh* or the offence committed against a Vaishnav. *Vaishnav-aparadh* is like a mad elephant that mercilessly tramples or uproots the plant and all efforts made by the gardener to protect it come to nought."³⁵

Mahaprabhu then went on to describe the various stages in the development of *bhakti*. He said, "The successive stages in the development of *bhakti* are *sraddha*, *sadhu-sanga*, *Bhajan-kriya*, *anartha-nivrtti*, *nishtha*, *ruchi*, *asakti*, *bhav*, *prem*. The first stage is *sraddha*, which means faith in Krishna, the *shastras*, and the *sadhus* (*saintly persons*). This is followed by the company of *sadhus* (*sadhu-sanga*). The company of *sadhus* presents an opportunity for *sravana* and *kirtan*. *Sadhu-sanga*, *sravana* and *kirtan* purge the mind of all evil thoughts (*anartha-nivrtti*). When the devotee is thus devoid of all anti-devotional thoughts, his reliance on Krishna becomes firm (*nishta*). The firmness of reliance creates a taste or natural liking for devotional activities (*ruchi*), which further develops into a strong inclination (*asakti*) for them. Then sprouts up the seed of unalloyed devotion in the heart of the devotee in the form of the spiritual emotion called *bhav* or *rati*, which ultimately ripens into *prem*.³⁶

³⁵ Ibid, 156.

³⁶ C. C., 2, 23, 5-9.

"As *prem* grows more and more intense, it develops into *sneha*, *mana*, *pranaya*, *raga*, *anuraga*, *bhav* or *mahabhav*."³⁷ *Sneha* is sublimated form of *prem*, in which the bond of affection is thicker and the attainment of Krishna is of a higher order. It causes greater melting of the mind (*chitta-dravatva*). A devotee at this stage cannot bear separation from Krishna even for a moment. His thirst for the sight of Krishna is never satisfied. It grows more and more.³⁸

"*Mana* is pretended repulse of endearment. It is even more intensified form of love than *sneha*. Therefore it leads to even greater melting of the mind. The excess of emotion in it is concealed and an unfavourable response to the beloved is pretended. But instead of causing any hinderance to the happiness of Krishna, it gives him a special kind of pleasure, which surpasses the relish of *sneha*.

"*Pranaya* is *mana* intensified to such an extent that it develops *Vishrambha* or confidence.³⁹ *Vishrambha* is the feeling of one's identity with the beloved. The identity, however, is not like the identity of *jiva* with *Brahman* in *sayujya-mukti*. It is identity, in which *prana* (life), *manah* (mind), *buddhi* (intelligence) and *deha* (body), etc., of the lover are regarded as identical with their counterparts in the beloved, so that the lover does not hesitate to do with

³⁷ C. C., 2, 19, 178.

³⁸ *Bhaktirasamritisindhu*, 3, 2, 43.

³⁹ *Ujjvalanila-mani, Sthayi*, 72 - 76.

the beloved what he does not hesitate to do with himself. For example, he does not hesitate to touch any part of the body of the beloved with his foot, just as he does not hesitate to touch any part of his own body with it.⁴⁰ This is why the playmates of Krishna do not have any hesitation in riding His shoulders, or offering Him to eat things, which they have themselves partly eaten.

“*Raga* is the state of intensified *pranaya*, in which even extreme sorrow is experienced as happiness, if it brings about a meeting with Krishna and even extreme happiness is experienced as sorrow, if it does not bring about or prevents meeting with Krishna. For example, when Radha climbs the top of a hill to gaze at Krishna, Her feet are severely scorched with the heat of the hill-stones and bruised by their sharp edges, yet she does not feel any pain, because Her entire body is filled with the supremely soothing and exhilarating calm of divine bliss.⁴¹

“*Anuraga* is *raga* intensified. When *raga* is intensified it appears as fresh and makes the beloved also appear as fresh at every step. The *rupa* (form) *guna* (attributes) and *madhurya* (sweetness) and all other things pertaining to Krishna appear as always fresh. On account of *anuraga*, though Radha always

⁴⁰ Vishvantha Chakravarti’s *Ananda-Candrika Tika* on *Ujjvalanilamani*, Sthayi, 78.

⁴¹ *Ujjvalanila-nila mani*, Sthayi, 84.

dallies with Krishna, He always appears to Her as new, as if She had never seen Him before.⁴²

“Bhav or *Mahabhav* is sublimated *anuraga*. *Mahabhav* appears in two stages — *rudha* and *adhirudha*. In *rudha mahabhav* five or six or all sattvik *bhavs* appear together in the most excited (*uddipta*) form. In *adhiruddha* they are even more excited. *Adhirudha* is indescribable. Shiva describes it to Parvati by saying, “If all the joys and sorrows of the transcendental Vaikunth and the infinite Brahmandas were collected into two separate heaps, these would not be equal to the shadow or even a drop of joy and sorrow of Radha’s love for Krishna.”⁴³ The sorrow of Radha, of course, is the transcendental sorrow, felt in separation from Krishna, which is even more relishable than the joy of union.”

At the end Mahaprabhu said to Rupa, “Rupa, I have given you a bare outline of *bhakti-rasa*. You should expand it through meditation. When you sit in meditation, Krishna will appear in your heart and reveal every thing.”⁴⁴

After imparting instruction to Rupa on *Bhakti-rasa* for ten days Mahaprabhu started for Varanasi. Rupa said, “If you kindly permit, I may also go with you.”

⁴² *Ujjivalanila-nila mani*, Sthayi, 106.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 123.

⁴⁴ C. C., 2, 19, 234 - 235.

Mahaprabhu said, "Just now you go to Vrindavan. From Vrindavan you can come and meet me in Nilachal."

As Mahaprabhu said this he embarked the boat to go to Varanasi.

On reaching Varanasi he stayed at the house of Chandrashekhar and began to wait for the fulfilment of his prophecy regarding the deliverance of Sanatan and his meeting with him in Varanasi.

MEETING SANATANA IN VARANASI (KASHI)

After Rupa had gone Sanatan stopped going to Husain Shah's darabar on the pretext of illness. Husain Shah became suspicious. Since Rupa had already gone, he thought Sanatan was also preparing to pack off. He could not afford to lose his able prime minister especially at the time, when the clouds of war with Orissa had started casting their shadow on his kingdom. He went himself to Ramkeli to see him. He saw him in the company of *Sadhus* and *Vaishnavs*, conversing with them in a happy mood. He said to him frowningly, "Sakar Mallik! Are you not aware of the present situation in the state? Is it proper for you at this time to feign illness and remain sitting at home? Do you not know that this kind of intransigence amounts to rebellion and is fraught with serious consequences? Give up this madness and hold the reigns of the state and run its affairs efficiently as before, otherwise get ready to face the consequences of disobeying my orders."

Sanatan replied boldly, "Your highness! I am now surrendered at the feet of my Lord. I am His servant and no one else's. I shall serve Him and take orders from Him and no one else."

SANATAN'S IMPRISONMENT AND DELIVERANCE

Husain Shah immediately arrested him and sent him to prison.

Sanatan always prayed to Mahaprabhu and said, "Mahaprabhu! You have kindly delivered Rupa from bondage. When will you deliver me? There is no one else who can. I have cast my dice. I have seen the hollowness of the world and renounced it completely. I have renounced power and pelf, name and fame, kith and kin and everything else to attain your lotus feet. You have said in Gita that You Yourself undertake the responsibility of looking after the welfare of one, who surrenders himself completely to You and knows no one else. But I find that I am now doubly chained. I tried to get out of the jail of Maya, but now I find that I am jailed within jail. How long will I rot in jail my Lord, how long? Show mercy on me."

Mahaprabhu responded to his prayer. He received a secret letter from Rupa, in which he said, "Mahaprabhu has started for Vrindavan. Vallabha and I are going to Vrindavan. You also come after securing your release from the jail by bribing the jailor. I have

deposited ten thousand *mohurs* with your favourite merchant for the purpose.”⁴⁵

The jailor, whose name was Sheikh Habu, was well disposed towards Sanatan, because Sanatan had done him some favour, when he was prime-minister. But he was afraid of Husain Shah. Sanatan said to him, “You need not fear. If Husain Shah returns alive from battle, you tell him that Sakara Malika went out to evacuate while in chains, and committed suicide by plunging into the river. I shall become a *daravesha*⁴⁶ and go to Mecca.” As he said this he placed the bag containing seven thousand *mohurs* before him. The jailor succumbed to the temptation. He not only cut asunder his chains, but arranged to send him to the other side of the Ganga.⁴⁷

Sanatan could not go to Vrindavan through the main road, for fear of being detected. He went through a circuitous route along with his servant Isan. Walking day and night for two days he reached mount Patara. There he stayed for a night at the house of a Bhumik.⁴⁸ The Bhumik treated him with bountiful generosity. He said, “You stay here comfortably tonight. In the morning my men will take you across the mountain.” Sanatan had not taken a morsel of food for two days. He bathed and ate to his fill the dainties munificently

⁴⁵ C. C., 2, 19, 30-34.

⁴⁶ A Mohammadan devotee.

⁴⁷ C. C., 2, 20, 9-14.

⁴⁸ Land owner.

served by the Bhumik. But he got suspicious. He had heard that the Bhumiks of that place welcomed the tourists, gave them accommodation and good things to eat, but at night they robbed them of all they had and killed them. Sanatan did not have anything of which he could be robbed. But he was not sure of Isan. He asked him, "Do you have any money?"

"I have seven *mohurs*," he replied.

"Seven *mohurs*! I brought you with me, because I thought you would be a good companion on the path of *vairagya*.⁴⁹ But I find that you are a *bhogi*,⁵⁰ not a *vairagi*. I feel aggrieved and disappointed." He took the *mohurs* from him and placed them before the Bhumik and said, "We have these *mohurs*. Please accept them and help us to cross the mountain."

Bhumik was impressed by the simplicity and generosity of Sanatan. He said, "You have prevented me from committing a sin. My astrologer had told me that you had eight *mohurs* with you. I would have taken them by killing you both at night. But now I shall not take them. I shall take you across the mountain without charging anything."

Sanatan said, "If you do not take them, some one else will, after killing us. So please accept them for the sake of our life."⁵¹

⁴⁹ Detachment from the world.

⁵⁰ One given to sensuous enjoyment.

⁵¹ C. C., 2, 20, 28-32.

The Bhumik then took the mohurs and sent them across the mountain escorted by four pike-men.

After they had crossed the mountain, Sanatan said to Isan, "The Bhumik spoke of eight *mohurs*. Do you have one more?"

"Yes, I have," said Isan.

"You return home with that mohur.⁵² Your path is different from mine. I depend on God, you depend on *mohurs*."

Isan went back to Ramkeli with tears in his eyes. Sanatan proceeded alone towards Vrindavan. Sanatan reached Hajipur. There he met Srikant, his brother-in-law, who held some high office in the *durabar* of Husain Shah and had gone to Hajipur to purchase horses for him.⁵³ Srikant could not bear the sight of his brother-in-law, the erstwhile prime-minister of Gaud, dressed like a beggar with only a *kantha*⁵⁴ over his body and a *karava* (an earthen pot) in his hand. He tried to persuade him to change his clothes, but couldn't. On his insistence, however, he accepted a blanket, because he said that it was too cold in the western region and a blanket was indispensable.⁵⁵

⁵² C. C., 2, 20, 32-35.

⁵³ Hajipur is a village near Shonapur in Bihar, where even today a big fair is held for a month beginning from Purnima in the month of Kartika, in which horses and elephants are brought from different parts of the country for sale.

⁵⁴ A patched cloth or quilt made of rags.

⁵⁵ C. C., 2, 20, 43.

Sanatan flung the blanket over his shoulder and started for Vrindavan. He was going fast, as fast as he could, in his anxiety to meet Mahaprabhu. On the way he sometimes got food to eat, sometimes not. Sometimes he slept at night, sometimes not. He kept waking and weeping throughout the night in remembrance of Mahaprabhu. For want of food, for want of sleep and for want of rest his body became frail, but he was unaware of it. He was unable to walk, but he was walking, sometimes tottering, sometimes quivering, sometimes falling like one, who had drunk deep of the nectar of love — love for the golden Krishna, who was called Gaurang.

MAHAPRABHU'S MEETING WITH SANATAN

Soon Sanatan reached Kashi. He heard that Mahaprabhu had returned from Vrindavan and was staying in Kashi at the house of Chandrasekhar and that his ecstatic dance and *kirtan* had generated an unprecedented wave of *bhav-bhakti*, which had been swashing the whole of Kashi. There was no limit to Sanatan's joy when he heard this.

The next morning he went and sat at the door of Chandrasekhar's house. His heart was restless to meet Mahaprabhu, but he was not able to gather courage to go in, because he thought he was lowly and undeserving. How strange! Sanatan, who was the Chief-minister of a big state, at whose door often sat hundreds of chieftans, landlords and officers holding

high position for favour of a brief audience, was now sitting at Chandrasekhar's door-step, considering himself so low and unworthy that he could not even knock at the door!

But this is the natural consequence of *bhakti*. *Bhakti* and humility go together. Absence of humility means absence of *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is called the mother of humility. It makes a devotee so humble that even if he be great, he regards himself as the lowliest of the lowly; even if he be pure and worshippable, he regards himself as impure and untouchable; even if he be a reservoir of *bhakti*, he regards himself as devoid of even a drop of *bhakti*; even if he be nearest to the Lord, he hesitates to knock at His door, because he thinks he does not deserve to meet Him on account of his impurity and the offences committed by him. It is not that he feigns to be so, it is natural to him.

But he does not have to knock. His eagerness, his earnest desire to meet the Lord is enough. The desire, like a call-bell automatically makes His heart and soul ring and He rushes barefooted from His high seat to embrace him. Mahaprabhu came to know that his dear Sanatan had come and he rushed towards him, shouting, "Hare Krishna! Hare Krishna!" Sanatan recognized his voice. As soon as he raised his head, he saw the treasure of his heart, the soul of his soul, the golden Gaurang rushing towards him with open arms and tearful eyes to embrace him, saying, "My Sanatan! My life! My soul!"

Sanatan lay prostrate before him like an old offender. Mahaprabhu wanted to lift and embrace him, but he quickly stepped aside and said, "Prabhu! I am too low and worldly a person. Having been in the service of a Muslim ruler, I am not fit to be touched by you. Please do not touch me."

"No, no, Sanatan! Damn your humility. My heart breaks to see it. On account of your *bhakti* you possess the power to purify the universe.⁵⁶ Let me also be blessed by your touch." So saying Mahaprabhu locked him in his arms and bathed him with his tears.

Mahaprabhu made him sit by his side, caressed him fondly and asked how he secured release from the prison. Sanatan narrated the whole story. Mahaprabhu then asked Chandrasekhar to change Sanatan's *daravesh* dress and give him the dress and form of a Vaishnav. Chandrasekhar got him shaved and after he had bathed in Ganga, he gave him a new dress to wear, which he did not accept.

Mahaprabhu went to the house of Tapana Misra⁵⁷ for *bhiksa* and took Sanatan with him. Tapana Misra fed him with Mahaprabhu's *mahaprasad*.

The next day Mahaprabhu introduced Sanatan to a Maharashriya Brahmin, who was his devotee. The

⁵⁶ C. C., 2, 20, 55.

⁵⁷ Tapana Misra had met Mahaprabhu, when he was on his tour of East Bengal and Mahaprabhu had advised him to go and live in Varanasi.

Brahamin requested Sanatan to take *mahaprasad* at his place as long as he stayed in Kashi. Sanatan said, "I can not take *bhiksa* regularly at one place. I would rather go for *madhukari*.⁵⁸

The Brahmin wanted to give him a new *dhoti*.⁵⁹ Sanatan said, "If you want to give me a *dhoti*, give me an old one used by you." The Brahmin did the same. Sanatan tore the *dhoti* into two pieces. He used one as *dora-kaupin*⁶⁰ and the other as *bahirvas*.⁶¹

Thus dressed as a Vaishnav *sadhu* Sanatan started for *madhukari*. Mahaprabhu was pleased to see this, but his eyes were fixed on the blanket he was carrying on his shoulder. Sanatan understood what he had indicated by his penetrating eye. He went to the bank of the Ganga, where he saw a beggar, with a *gudadi*.⁶² He said to the beggar, "Brother! Please take my blanket and give me your *gudadi*. I shall feel greatly obliged."

The beggar frowned and said, "You are yourself a beggar like me. You have no right to jest with me and make fun of my *gudadi*, because some one has given you a blanket."

Sanatan explained to him that he was not jesting and succeeded in exchanging his blanket with the

⁵⁸ Begging pieces of bread from several places instead of taking whole meal from one place.

⁵⁹ A sheet of cloth worn by men or women.

⁶⁰ A cloth worn over privities.

⁶¹ An outer garment.

⁶² A quilt made of rags.

gudadi. He draped himself with the *gudadi* and came to Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu's face radiated with joy. Though he knew everything, he said with feigned astonishment, "Sanatan! What has happened to your blanket?" When Sanatan told him how he had exchanged it with the *gudadi*, he was wearing, he said approvingly, "Yes, so I thought. When Krishna has, like a good physician, mercifully cured you of the disease of worldly attachment, why should he let the smallest trace of it remain."⁶³

Thus by making the prime-minister of Bengal renounce even the last vestige of worldly attachment Mahaprabhu set up an ideal of Vaishnav *Sannyas* and breathed a new life into the Vaishnav *sampradaya*.

After this began the series of question-answers, whereby Mahaprabhu preached to the world through Sanatan the cardinal principles of pure *Bhagavat* religion. Sanatan asked one question after another and Mahaprabhu answered.

First Mahaprabhu established Krishna as the Supreme Godhead and described the other gods as His various incarnations. Then he dwelt at length upon *sadhana-bhakti* and *raganuga-bhakti*. After keeping Sanatan in his close proximity for two months and making him fully conversant with the principles of Vaishnavism, he said to him, "Sanatan, some time ago, I met your brother Rupa at Prayag. I instructed him

⁶³ C. C., 2, 20, 90.

and made him proficient in *Krishna-rasa* and sent him to Vrindavan to expound and preach it to others. You also go to Vrindavan. I am entrusting you with four important tasks:

The rediscovery of the holy places connected with the *lila* of Sri Krishna in Vraj.

The establishment of the doctrine of unalloyed devotion (*Shuddha bhakti*).

The installation of *Krishna-vigrahas*⁶⁴ and

The preparation of a code-book of conduct for the Vaishnavs.”

Besides he said, “You will also have to look after my devotees, who will go to Vrindavan for *bhajan* after renouncing the world with nothing at all to steer them across the ocean of the world except a *kantha* and *karava*.⁶⁵

Sanatan said, “Prabhu! If you want me to do all this, kindly impart *shakti* by placing your foot on my head.”

Mahaprabhu placed his benedictory hand upon his head and blessed him.

MERCY ON SUBUDDHI RAYA

In Varanasi Mahaprabhu met Subuddhi Raya. Subuddhi Raya was the King of Gaud. Husain Shah was an

⁶⁴ *Vigraha* = image of a deity.

⁶⁵ C. C., 2, 25, 176.

officer working under him. Subuddhi Raya once had him flogged for some offense committed by him. Some time later the ruler of Delhi conquered Gaud and made Husain Shah the king of Gaud. Still Husain Shah respected Subuddhi Raya, whom he appointed a minister under him. When his wife came to know that Subuddhi Raya had once flogged him, she insisted that he must be punished. On her insistence he made him lose his caste⁶⁶ by forcibly making him drink the water from his *karava*.⁶⁷ Subuddhi Raya then went to Varanasi. He asked the pandits there how he could atone for drinking the water of a Muslim's *karava*. They said, "You must commit suicide by drinking boiling ghee. There is no other way for atonement." Subuddhi Raya then met Mahaprabhu and told him about his plight. Mahaprabhu said, "You go to Vrindavan. Always do Nam-sankirtan. Your defilement and all your sins will go and you will attain the lotus feet of Krishna."⁶⁸

CONVERSION OF PRAKASHANAND

Prakashanand and his disciples continued to decry and defame Mahaprabhu. The Maharashtri Brahmin felt very much pained at heart. He felt sure that if he could

⁶⁶ The orthodox Hindus believed that a Hindu lost his caste, if he was made to drink water from the *karava* of a Muslim.

⁶⁷ Karava is a water-pot with a nozzle.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 151 - 152.

once bring about a meeting between Prakashanand and Mahaprabhu, Prakashanand's heart would be purified by his *darshan*. He would not only cease to condemn him, he would be compelled to recognize him as Bhagavan and surrender himself at his feet.⁶⁹ Therefore one day he invited him and his disciples at his place. They accepted his invitation. Then he went to Mahaprabhu. He fell at his feet and with folded hands requested him also to accept his invitation. Tapan Misra and Chandrashekhar had already requested him to save them from the agony of hearing his continuous condemnation by the Sannyasis of Varanasi. Mahaprabhu took pity on them. He resolved to show mercy on Prakashanand and accepted the invitation. He went to the house of the Brahmin on the appointed day and time. He saw that Prakashanand and his follower Sannyasis had already arrived and were sitting under a large canopy, each looking like a peak of mountain of pride, with Prakashanand sitting in the middle as the highest peak of the mountain. They were filled with rage and curiously and were anxious to see what the so much talked about young Sannyasi was like. Prakashanand was sitting with rage and a sense of injured pride, because the young Sannyasi had come to Varanasi last time and gone without seeing him. This was not a small insult to him, because he was respected as the king of Sannyasis all over the country. He had compromised his dignity by accepting

the invitation of the Brahmiin, because he thought he would get an opportunity to avenge his insult and smash the pride of the young Sannyasi.

As soon as Mahaprabhu entered the canopy with Sanatan and his three other devotees, the Sannyasis cried, "Chaitanya has come, Chaitanya has come!" But as they looked at him, they were surprised to see an extremely beautiful youth, looking as the very figure of simplicity and humility, coming slowly with eyes cast downwards. He inspired reverence and they stood up.⁷⁰ He raised his head and made obeisance to everyone. Then he washed his feet and sat down near the place for washing feet.

Prakashanand also was surprised to see him. The very first sight of him started the process of purification of his heart. The radiance of his face and the lustre of his body made him feel that he was superhuman. His humility and child like simplicity made him think that he was not an object of hatred, but of love. His heart was forcibly drawn towards him. He cried out, "Sripad! Why do you sit on that unclean spot? Come near."

Mahaprabhu said, "I belong to a low Sampradaya."⁷¹ I cannot sit amongst you."

Prakashanand held him by the hand and made him sit in the middle of the assembly. He said, "I know

⁷⁰ C. C., 1, 7, 58 - 59.

⁷¹ Amongst the Sannyasis Sarasvati, Puri and Tirth are regarded as high, and Bharati is regarded as low. Mahaprabhu belonged to Bharati Sampradaya.

that your name is Sri Krishna Chaitanya and you are a disciple of Keshav Bharati. But though a Sannyasi, I do not know why you do not mix with us. It is the duty of a Sannyasi to study Vedanta and meditate upon Brahman. But you sing and dance like a sentimentalist with the sentimentalists. You look like Narayan, but behave like the lowly. Why?"⁷²

Mahaprabhu said, "Listen Sripad! My Guru said to me 'You are dull and stupid, therefore unfit for Vedant. You always repeat Krishna-mantra. Krishna-mantra will deliver you from bondage and help you attain the lotus feet of Krishna. The Name of Krishna is the essence of the Shastras.' Then he recited the following Shlok:

*"harernam harernam harernamiva kevalam/
kalau nastyeva nastyeva nastyeva gatiranyatha//*

—The name of Hari, the name of Hari, the name of Hari alone is the means for deliverance in the age of Kali. Other means there is none, there in none, there is none.'

"He asked me to learn this Shlok by heart. The name impaired my mind. It made me weep and laugh, sing and dance. I thought I had gone mad. I said to the Guru, 'The *mantra* you gave me has made me mad. It makes me laugh and weep, dance and sing.'

⁷² Ibid, 66 - 68.

The Guru laughed and said, ‘You are fortunate. You have attained Krishna-prem, the fifth and the ultimate End, beyond which there is nothing else to attain. You are now always swimming in the ocean of *anand* (bliss). It is *anand* caused by Krishna-*prem* that makes you dance and sing. *Brahmanand* or the *anand* one experiences on the attainment of Moksha is not even a drop of the ocean of *anand* caused by Krishna-*prem*. You should dance and sing the Name of Krishna with the devotees, so that they may all realize Krishna-*prem*.’ Therefore I always dance and sing the Name of Krishna. It is in fact not I, who dances and sings, but the Name that makes me dance and sing.”⁷³

The Sannyasis were moved to hear the sweet words of Mahaprabhu. Their minds were turned. Still they said, “What you say about Krishna-prem is true. It is only the fortunate ones, who are blessed with Krishna-prem. But why do you not listen Vedanta? What is wrong with it?”⁷⁴

Mahaprabhu laughed and said, “If you kindly do not take it ill, I may reply.”

The Sannyasis said, “There is no question of our taking it ill. You look like Narayan Himself. What you will say will be cogent and true.”⁷⁵

Mahaprabhu said, “Vedanta-sutra is the word of God in the form of Vyasa dev. It cannot be false. But

⁷³ Ibid, 69 - 93.

⁷⁴ C. C., 1, 7, 94 - 96.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 97 - 100.

it is true only, if we take its direct meaning. The commentary of Shankaracharya is based on its indirect meaning. It is, therefore, baneful to listen to his commentary. It is, however, not his fault. He has covered the truth through his indirect interpretation, because he was so ordained by God.”⁷⁶

After this Mahaprabhu took up some of the principal Sutras of the Brahma-sutra. He proved by interpreting them according to their direct meaning how the doctrine of Shankaracharya was wrong and imaginary, as he had done in the case of Sarvabhuam Bhattacharya.⁷⁷

Then he explained on the basis of the direct meaning of the Sutras how the *Sambandha-tattva* or the ultimate reality was Krishna, *Abhidheya* or the means for attaining Krishna was *Bhakti* and *Prayojana* or the End was Krishna-prem.⁷⁸

The Sannyasis were surprised and impressed. They said, “You are Yourself Veda and Narayana, the source of the Vedas. We are sorry, because we talked ill of you. Kindly excuse us for our offenses.”⁷⁹ Their minds changed. They always talked of Krishna and chanted His name.⁸⁰ Prakashanand’s mind also changed.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 101 - 105.

⁷⁷ C. C., 1, 7, 127.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 137 - 139.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 141 - 142.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 143 - 145.

The next day when the Maharashtri Brahamin went to the Ashram of Prakashanand, he saw that instead of discussing Vedant they were all the time talking of Mahaprabhu and the basic principles of the philosophy of Brahma-sutra as interpreted by Mahaprabhu. One of the Sannyasis said, "Sri Krishna Chaitanya is Narayan. What he says is true. Brahman is perfect in all respects. If we regard Brahman as formless and attributeless, His perfection cannot be maintained. Regarding the Sri Vigraha of Krishna as illusory, as Shankaracharya does, is a great offence."⁸¹

Prakashanand said, "Shankaracharya's insistence is on Advaitism. Advaitism cannot be established, if the Sri Vigraha of Krishna is regarded as real. Therefore he interprets the Brahma-sutra in a different way. The propounder of each of the different systems of philosophy interprets Brahman-sutra in his own way to suit his own system of philosophy. Sri Krishna Chaitanya is free from any such bias. His interpretation alone is true. What he says is the essence of all the Shastras."⁸²

The Maharashtri Brahamin was pleased to hear this. He reported this to Mahaprabhu, when after his bath in the Ganga, he was going to the temple of Bindumadhava. Mahaprabhu laughed.

Mahaprabhu danced and sang in Sankirtan with Sanatan, Tapan, Shekhar and PaRamnand before

⁸¹ C. C., 2, 25, 21 - 38.

⁸² Ibid, 38 - 49.

Bindumadhav. Thousands of people joined the Sankirtan. The sound of 'Haribol', which rent the sky, also reached the ears of Prakashanand. He felt attracted and came running with his followers to the temple of Bindumadhav. What they saw they had never seen or imagined before. Mahaprabhu was dancing and singing, "*haraye Namh krishna yadavaye Namh/ gopal govind nam sri madhusudana//*" His golden body was stormed with Sattvik-*bhavs* like tears, tremor, horripilation, stupor and sweating. Tears shot forth from his eyes like streams of a fountain and drenched the people all round. The atmosphere was charged with a powerful current of *bhav*, which made everyone dance and sing. Prakashanand and his disciples could not remain unaffected. They also began to dance and sing 'Haribol'.⁸³

The crowd that had gathered revived Mahaprabhu's outward consciousness. He stopped his dance to see the Sannyasis. He made obeisance to Prakashanand. Prakashanand fell at the feet of Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu said, "You are Jagatguru⁸⁴. I am not even like your disciple's disciple. You are like Brahman. By touching my feet you cause great harm to me."⁸⁵

Prakashanand said, "In the past I committed great offence by always talking ill of you. By touching your

⁸³ C. C., 2, 25, 51 - 60.

⁸⁴ Guru of everyone in the world.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 61 - 64.

feet I have atoned for all my sins and offenses.” After saying this he recited two Shloks which were indicative of the divinity of Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu said, “Vishnu, Vishnu! It is a great offense to extol a low creature like me as Bhagavan.”⁸⁶

Prakashanand said, “Prabhu! Do not deceive me. You are no other than Bhagavan. Even if now you have the conceit of a devotee, You are worshipable.” After saying this he recited three Shloks from Srimad Bhagavat in support of what he said. Then he added, I worship your feet, because they will generate *Bhakti*.⁸⁷

Prakashanand then sat down with Mahaprabhu and said, “You rightly criticised Shankaracharya’s commentary of Brahma-sutra as imaginary. We would like to hear from you more about its real meaning.”

Mahaprabhu said, “Vyasadeva is Bhagavan. It is not possible for an ordinary *jiva* like me to understand the real meaning of His Brahma-sutra. He alone can explain its real meaning. He has out of mercy for the *jivas* compiled Srimad Bhagavat as his own commentary on Brahma-sutra.⁸⁸ You, therefore, study Srimad Bhagavat and always do Krishna-nam-kirtan. You will not only get the real meaning of Brahma-sutra and the essence of the Vedas and the Upanishads,

⁸⁶ Ibid, 65 - 67.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 70.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 108.

you will get Krishna-*prem* as its primary result and Mukti as its by-product.”⁸⁹ Mahaprabhu then got up to go back to his place. Everyone shouted ‘Hari, Hari.’

With the conversion of Prakashanand and his disciples, Varanasi was drowned in a tidal wave of *Bhakti*. Varanasi became Nadiya. Everyone chanted the name of Krishna and sang and danced.⁹⁰ Lacs and lacs of people began to pour in from the adjoining villages to have the *darshan* of Mahaprabhu.⁹¹ When Mahaprabhu went to the Ganga to bathe or to a temple for *darshan*, they stood on either side of the road for his *darshan*. He raised his arms and said, “Say ‘Krishna Hari’”. They bowed down to him and shouted ‘Hari, Hari.’

Mahaprabhu said to his companions, “I came to Kashi to sell the ‘black filth of sentimentalism’ (*bhav-kali*). I could not sell it for want of customers. I also could not carry the load back, because you would have been unhappy to see me carrying it. Therefore, as desired by you, I squandered it away without any price.”⁹²

The companions said, “Prabhu! The purpose of Your incarnation is to deliver mankind from bondage. You had blessed East, West and South. Only Varanasi

⁸⁹ Ibid, 111 - 112.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 117 - 120.

⁹¹ Ibid, 126 - 129.

⁹² C. C., 2, 25, 121 - 123.

remained. You have now blessed Varanasi as well and made us happy.”⁹³

After blessing Varanasi one night Mahaprabhu started for Nilachal. Sanatan, Chandrashekhar, Tapan, the Maharashtri Brahamin and Parmanand wanted to go with him. He did not permit, because he wanted to go alone through the forest of Jharikhand. He said to Sanantan, “Your two brothers have already gone to Vrindavan. You also go there. You will have to take care of my devotees, who go there to do *bhajan* after renouncing the world.”⁹⁴ After saying this he embraced each one of them and started for Nilachal. The companions fell senseless on the ground. On regaining consciousness Sanatan started for Vrindavan.⁹⁵

Mahaprabhu went through the forest of Jharikhand, sporting merrily with the animals as before.⁹⁶

⁹³ Ibid, 124 - 125.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 135 - 136.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 137.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 174 - 175.

CHAPTER XXVI

RETURN TO NILACHAL

Shouting ‘Ha Jagannath! Ha Jagannath!’ Mahaprabhu reached Nilachal. The news of his arrival spread like lightning every where. Crowds of devotees began to run for his *darshan*. Life again came to their dead bodies to see him. Mahaprabhu embraced each one of his dear devotees, who had so long been suffering the pangs of separation. He went with them to the temple of Jagannath and sang and danced before Jagannath for a long time.

Sarvabhaum invited him for *Bhiksa* at his place. He said, “I have met my dear devotees after a long time. I will not leave them and go anywhere today. I shall dine with them all at my place in the house of Kashi Misra. You send the *prasad* there.”

Mahaprabhu went to the house of Kashi Misra, where he dined with the devotees.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE DEVOTEES FROM GAUD: THE DOG OF SHIVANAND

Svarup sent the information regarding Mahaprabhu’s arrival to the devotees in Gaud. They were happy to

know this and started for Nilachal.¹ Shivanand Sen made arrangements for their food and lodging on the way as usual.

A dog, who was a devotee, accompanied Shivanand. Shivanand took special care of him. He himself gave him Thakur's *prasad* every day. On the way a river had to be crossed. The boatman refused to take the dog. Shivanand had to make him agree by giving him special fare.² One day Shivanand had to stay longer at the tax collector's office on the way. The servant forgot to give *prasad* to the dog. The dog disappeared. Shivanand sent his men all round to search him. He could not be found anywhere. Because the dog had gone without food, Shivanand also did not eat that day. The next morning again he tried to search him, but he could not be found. When he reached Nilachal and went to Mahaprabhu for *darshan*, he saw the dog sitting at some distance from Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu was throwing pieces of the kernel of cocoanut before him and he was eating with pleasure. Mahaprabhu was saying to him, "Say 'Krishna', say 'Ram', say 'Hari' and he was saying in a loud tone what Mahaprabhu made him say.³ Shivanand made obeisance to the dog and begged pardon of him for what he thought was his offence. The next day again the dog could not be seen

¹ C. C., 3, 1, 8 - 9.

² Ibid, 13 - 14.

³ Ibid, 24 - 25.

anywhere. Krishnadas Kaviraj and Kavikarnapur say that Mahaprabhu had delivered him from bondage by making him chant Harinam. He had attained a spiritual body and gone to Vaikunth.⁴

THREE WAYS OF MAHAPRABHU'S MERCY ON THE JIVAS

Mahaprabhu took Sannyas for the deliverance of the *jivas*. For six years after Sannyas he went about from place to place with the sole purpose of delivering the *jivas*. After that he remained in Nilachal and did not go anywhere. Still the work of the deliverance of the *jivas* continued. Kaviraj Gosvami mentions three different ways in which this work was carried on. Mahaprabhu delivered the *jivas* by *Saksat-darshan*, that is, by appearing before them in person and blessing them by His *darshan*; by *Avesh*, that is by appearing through a deserving person, whom He possessed and who had the same Shakti to impart *Krishna-prem* as he had, and by *Avirbhav*, that is, by appearing before the devotees in another body, while He remained in Nilachal in His original body.⁵

By *saksat-darshan* Mahaprabhu blessed millions of people with *Krishna-prem*. Even the gods and the Gandharvas came in the guise of men to have His *darshan* and were blessed with *Krishna-prem*. Any one,

⁴ Ibid, 27.

⁵ C. C., 3, 2, 2 - 5.

who saw Him but once was maddened with *prem* and laughed and wept, sang and danced in *prem*.⁶

For the sake of people, who could not come for His *darshan* from distant places, Mahaprabhu possessed the body of a pure devotee through *Avesh* and blessed them through him. An example of this is Nakul Brahmachari. Mahaprabhu entered his heart to deliver the *jivas* of Gaud.⁷ He laughed and wept, sang and danced and roared aloud in love. Tears, tremor, stupor, horripilation and the other *Sattvik-bhavs* always adorned his body. The lustre of his body also became golden.⁸ People came to see him. On seeing him they were also maddened with love and sang and danced like him.⁹

Shivanand Sen heard that he had 'Chaitanya-*avesh'*. He went to see him. He was filled with doubt. In order to test him, he remained outside his house for some time. He said to himself, "If he calls me in and utters my Ishta-mantra, I shall know that he has the *Avesh* of Sri Chaitanya, otherwise not. The place was crowded with visitors. It was difficult for anyone to go in and have his *darshan*. Suddenly Nakul shouted, "Shivanand is standing outside. Go and bring him in." People went out and began to shout, "Who is Shivanand? Prabhu calls him." Shivanand went in,

⁶ Ibid, 9 - 10.

⁷ Ibid, 16.

⁸ Ibid, 17 - 19.

⁹ Ibid, 20.

made obeisance to him and sat down. He said, "You are filled with doubt. Now remove your doubt by listening to your Ishta-mantra. It is the four-lettered Gaur-gopal-¹⁰ mantra." Shivanand's doubt was removed.

An example of appearance before a devotee by *Avirbhav* is Mahaprabhu's appearance before Nrisinhanand. Once Mahaprabhu conveyed to Shivanand that in the month of Pausha that year he would surprise him by his visit to him and take *prasad* at his house. In the month of Pausha that year Jagadanand also was staying at the house of Shivanand. Both Shivanand and Jagadanand made arrangements for a feast for him everyday in the month of Paush expecting that he would come, but he did not. At the end of the month Nrisinhanand happened to go to Shivanand's house. Shivanand told him about his grief on Mahaprabhu's not coming as promised. Nrsinhanand said, "You need not worry. I shall bring him here in three days."¹¹ He felt assured, because he knew that Mahaprabhu was sold out to him on account of his love.

Nrisinhanand meditated for two days. Then he said to Shivanand, "I have brought Mahaprabhu up to Panihati. Tomorrow at midday he will come and eat the food cooked by me. Give me all the provisions I need for cooking. Shivanand gave him all that he needed.

¹⁰ Ibid, 29 - 31.

¹¹ Ibid, 50.

The next day Nrisinhanand prepared different kinds of dainties and offered *bhog* to Jagannath, Mahaprabhu and his Ishta Nrisinha, separately to each. Then he went outside and began to meditate. He saw in meditation that Mahaprabhu came happily and started eating. He ate the *bhog* for all the three. As he was eating, Nrisinhanand shouted, "What are you doing? You and Jagannath are one. You can eat Jagannath's *bhog*, but why are you eating the *bhog* of my Ishta Sri Nrisinhadeva?"¹² Mahaprabhu wanted to make him understand that Jagannath, Nrisinha and He were one. Nrisinhanad was in fact happy to see Mahaprabhu eating the *bhog* for all three, but outwardly he had to express his grief, for how can a devotee see his Ishta going without food.

After eating Mahaprabhu went to Panihati. Shivanand said to Nrisinhanand, "Why were you shouting grievously when meditating?" He said, "You see your Prabhu's Lila. He ate His own *bhog* as well as the *bhog* of Jagannath and Nrisinhadeva, who remained hungry." Shivanand did not believe until Mahaprabhu himself told him, when he went to Nilachal next time, how he enjoyed eating the nice things cooked by Nrsinhanand that day, and Nrisinhanand had to cook again for Nrisinhadev.¹³

Krishnadas Kaviraj says that by *Avirbhav* Mahaprabhu used to be always present at the house of

¹² Ibid, 62 - 63.

¹³ Ibid, 75 77.

Shachi at meals, at the dance of Nityanand, at Sankirtan at the house of Srivas and the house of Raghav.¹⁴

MERCY THROUGH PUNISHMENT ON CHOTA HARIDAS

Mahaprabhu also sometimes showered his mercy upon a devotee through punishment; which not only reformed him and led ultimately to his spiritual well-being, but served as a warning to others against doing anything, which might prove detrimental to *Bhakti*. An example of this is the punishment he gave to Chota Haridas.

Chota Haridas was a young *kirtan* singer and one of the closest and dearest devotees of Mahaprabhu. He had a sweet voice. Mahaprabhu always kept him near to hear *kirtan* from him. He was also intimate with Bhagavan Acharya. After Mahaprabhu's Sannyas Bhagavan Acharya had also renounced the world and gone from Navadvip to Nilachal. He often invited Mahaprabhu for *Bhiksa*. One day when he invited Mahaprabhu, he asked Chota Haridas to bring some rice of fine quality from Madhavi, the sister of Shikhi Mahiti. He brought the rice from her.

When Mahaprabhu sat down to eat, he said to Bhagavan Acharya, "Where did you get this precious rice from?"

¹⁴ Ibid, 32 - 33.

"I got it from Madhavi Devi in *bhiksa*."

Mahaprabhu looked at Bhagavan Acharya with a sarcastic smile and asked, "Who went for *Bhiksa*?"

"Your Chota Haridas," replied Bhagavan Acharya.

Mahaprabhu said nothing. But when he had gone to his place, he called his servant Govind and said, "Govind! Do not let Chota Haridas come to me from today."

When Chota Haridas came to know about this, he fell senseless on the ground.

All other devotees also felt deeply hurt at heart to hear about Mahaprabhu's stern order against Chota Haridas. But no one had the courage to ask him about the reason.

Chota Haridas lay motionless at his house without food and drink, as if he was dead, for three days. After three days Svarup went to Mahaprabhu with the other devotees and said with folded hands in a meek voice, "Prabhu! What offence has Haridas committed on account of which he has been denied your *darshan*?"

Mahaprabhu said, "I do not want to see the face of a Vairagi¹⁵, who talks with women. Don't you know that even the wooden image of a woman can arouse lust in a man, who prides himself on being the conqueror of lust?" After saying so he stood up and went in.

¹⁵ Renunciant.

The next day again the devotees went to Mahaprabhu. He was at that time counting beads and looked grave. Svarup said to him with folded hands and voice trembling with fear, "Prabhu! Haridas has committed a minor offense. He has also been punished, because he has been fasting for three days. You may now be pleased to forgive him."

Suddenly Mahaprabhu's *bhav* changed. His eyes became red with anger. He said, "My mind is not under my control. I cannot hear anything about a *Vairagi*, who talks with woman. If again you talk about him you will not see me here."

Everyone made obeisance to Mahaprabhu and left. Everyone loved Chota Haridas immensely. Everyone felt concerned about him, because he had not committed a great offense by going to the old and saintly Madhavi Devi for *bhiksa* at the behest of Bhagavan Acharya. Therefore they all went to Puri Gosvami, whom Mahaprabhu respected as his Guru and requested him to pacify Mahaprabhu.

Puri Gosvami went to Mahaprabhu. As soon as he took the name of Haridas, wanting to say something about him, Mahaprabhu became serious. He said, "Gosvami Ji! You live here with the Vaishnavs. I will go to Alalanath with Govind and live there." He said this and called Govind, made obeisance to Puri Gosvami and started for Alalanath. Puri Gosvami somehow stopped him. He said, "You are the Lord of the universe and you are free to do what you like.

Whatever you do is for the good of the *jivas*, who cannot penetrate the depth of your mind."

Then in utter disappointment the devotees went to Chota Haridas. Svarup said to him, "Prabhu is adamant. But he is all merciful. Sooner or later he would have mercy on you. You give up your obstinacy and take food. Prabhu's anger will subside as the time passes." Haridas obeyed. He never went to Mahaprabhu or allowed himself to be seen by him. But he had his *darshan* from some distant place, where he hid himself at the time of his going to the Jagannath temple.

One year passed in this way. There was no change in Mahaprabhu's attitude. Haridas could no more bear his separation. Losing all hope of attaining his loving service in this life, he went to Prayag and resolving to attain him in the next life, committed suicide by plunging into the sacred confluence of Ganga and Yamuna.

His desire was fulfilled. Bhagavan, Who always fulfils the desire of his devotees, gave him a spiritual body, with which he could serve Mahaprabhu. From the very moment he left his physical body, every day at night he sang *kirtan* to Mahaprabhu in his subtle body, which no one could see.¹⁶

The question is often raised, "Wasn't the punishment given to Haridas very much out of

¹⁶ ibid, 146-147.

proportion to the fault committed by him? Wouldn't a warning have been sufficient?"

We may reply by repeating the words of Puri Gosvami: Whatever Mahaprabhu did was for the good of the *jivas* though it was not always possible for us to penetrate the depth of his mind. But Krishna das Kaviraj seems to have been able to penetrate the depth of his mind. He says—

*"mahaprabhu kripasindhu ke pare bujhite/
priya bhakte dand kare dharma shikhaite//
(C.C., 3,2, 141)*

—Mahaprabhu is the ocean of mercy. We cannot understand him. He punishes his dear devotee to teach others."

There is a proverb in Bengali "*dhi ke mariya bau ke shiksa*—Beat the daughter to teach the daughter-in-law."

Your daughter is your own. You can beat or rebuke her as you like, which you cannot do to your daughter-in-law, because she comes from another family. Therefore it is sometimes expedient to teach the daughter-in-law by punishing the daughter. With Mahaprabhu lived many elderly devotees and Sannyasis to whom he could not directly say anything. But it was his responsibility to see that they did not slip from the path of *Bhakti*. Therefore he punished a young devotee, who was so close and dear to him, so that it

might be a lesson to all others. This had the desired effect. As Krishna Kaviraj says:

*"dekhi trasa upajila saba bhaktagane/
svapneo chadila sabhe stri-sambhashane//*

(C.C., 3,2, 142)

—On seeing the fate of Chota Haridas, all other devotees were scared. No one ever talked with a woman even in dream.”

Apart from the explanation given by Krishna Das Kaviraj, we may ask, “Did Mahaprabhu really punish Chota Haridas? Did he not, under the pretext of punishment, give him a spiritual body in place of a physical body and accept him as his companion for ever to serve him eternally?”

DAMODAR'S REPRIMAND OF MAHAPRABHU

Mahaprabhu was so strict regarding the Vairagis and Sannyasis having any kind of association with women that he allowed his devotees to reprimand even him, if they found in his behaviour anything that might suggest to the critical minded persons even indirect or distant relationship with a woman. Damodar Pandit once reprimanded him for what appeared to him to provide such an opportunity to them.

A very handsome and young Brahmin boy, the son of a beautiful young widow, used to come to Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu loved to talk to him.

Damodar did not like this. He asked the boy repeatedly not to come, but he did not listen. One day Damodar said to Mahaprabhu ironically, "You teach the rules of good conduct to others. People call you 'Gosain'. Your reputation as Gosain is now going to increase. For everyone will soon start talking about your conduct. You will then know what kind of a Gosain you are."¹⁷

"What do you mean Damodar?" said Mahaprabhu.

Damodar said, "You are the Lord of the universe, and You are free to do what you like. Who can prevent you? But can you gag and stop the people from talking about you? Why do you show much affection for that son of a widow? The widow is not doubt chaste and pious, but her fault is that she is beautiful and young. You are also young and beautiful. You are a pandit. Why do you give occasion to the people for casting aspersions on you?"¹⁸

Mahaprabhu laughed within. He felt extremely satisfied and said to himself, "This is pure love. No one is more intimate with me in love."¹⁹

Another day he called Damodar. He said to him, "Damodar! You go to Navadvip and live with my mother. No one can serve her as a guide and protector better than you. Under your care and watchfulness everything will be allright. No one will do anything

¹⁷ C. C., 3, 3, 10 - 11.

¹⁸ Ibid, 13 - 17.

¹⁹ Ibid, 18.

wrong. You are unattached to everything and therefore fearless. You do not hesitate to reprimand even me. You can come to see me occasionally and go back.”²⁰

Further he added, “Convey my obeisances to Ma. Make her happy by always talking with her about me. Also tell her the secret that I always go to her to eat the *prasad* she offers to me in meditation on a banana leaf. She sees me eating, but regards it as a dream or hallucination. On the Sankranti day of the month of Magh, she prepared many nice things. After offering them to Krishna, she lovingly offered *prasad* to me in meditation. It brought tears to my eyes. I went happily and ate. She was happy to see that I ate every thing. After some time, when she opened her eyes and wiped off her tears, she saw the leaf²¹ empty. She thought that it was a dream and she had actually forgotten to serve. She looked into the pots in which food was cooked. She found them full. She served again and again I ate. This was repeated a number of times. Everytime she offered I ate, because I could not restrain myself from eating the offerings made by her. Tell her that it was not a dream or hallucination. I live here in Nilachal as bidden by her, but I go to her again and again, attracted by her love.”²²

Mahaprabhu gave to Damodar Jagannath’s *prasad*

²⁰ Ibid, 20 - 24.

²¹ The plaintain leaf on which *prasad* was served.

²² Ibid, 31 - 38.

for Ma and the other Vaishnavs. He then went to Navadvip and began to live with Ma.

THE DEPTH OF MAHAPRABHU'S CONCERN FOR THE DELIVERANCE OF THE JIVAS

The extent to which Mahaprabhu was concerned about the deliverance of the *jivas* and the extent to which he extended his mercy to deliver them is known from a conversation he once had with Haridas. He said to Haridas, "Haridas! I am deeply concerned about the Mohammadans, who commit great sin by killing the Brahmins and the cows. Tell me how they can be delivered."

Haridas said with a smile, "Prabhu! You need not worry about them. For, when they express disgust against anything, or when they kill an animal, they say, 'Haram, Haram!' Thus they unknowingly take the name of 'Ram', which paves the way for their deliverance. Ajamil called his son Narayan at the time of his death. Since Narayan is the name of the Lord, he was delivered."

Mahaprabhu said again, "Haridas! Besides the Mohammadans there are many other beings, both animate and inanimate, about whom I am concerned. How will they be delivered?"

Haridas said with folded hands, "Prabhu! You have granted Vasudev Dutt's prayer regarding the deliverance of all beings. You are delivering them all through loud

kirtan. The animate beings are delivered by hearing the *kirtan*, the inanimate by echoing it. The echo is not simply echo. It is the *kirtan* of the inanimate beings.²³ You have preached loud Sankirtan, which is going on everywhere. Loud Sankirtan will deliver all animate and inanimate beings in the world.”

Mahaprabhu said, “If all the *jivas* of this *brahmand* are delivered, will not the *brahmand* become empty?” Haridas said, “The purpose of Your incarnation is to deliver all the *jivas*. You will deliver them all and send them to Vaikunth. Then the *jivas*, who now exist in a subtle form in *Karana-samudra* will be energized by their past karmas. They will come and fill the *brahmand* in the shape of animate and inanimate beings.”²⁴

Haridas further added, “Just as in the past Krishna appeared in Vraja and delivered all the *jivas* of this *brahmand*, you have appeared in Navadvip to deliver all the *jivas*.”²⁵

Mahaprabhu was pleased to hear this. He gave a hearty embrace to Haridas, but asked him not to divulge this secret to anyone.

²³ Ibid, 64 - 66.

²⁴ Ibid, 73 - 75.

²⁵ Ibid, 78 - 79.

THE CONDITION OF VISHNUPRIYA

While sending Damodar to Navadvip Mahaprabhu did not make any mention of Vishnupriya. Her condition was much worse than that of Shachi. She could not even weep or wail like her. Her main concern and responsibility now was to alleviate the suffering of Ma by her sweet words and loving service. If Ma saw her weeping she would weep all the more on account of her concern for her. Therefore she had to pretend to be calm and free from sorrow or anxiety externally. But she wept within and the fire of suffering in separation always blazed in her heart and threatened to consume and reduce her into ashes.

How is it that she still survived? She survived because she had the satisfaction that her suffering like the sacrifice and suffering of her husband was for the deliverance of the suffering humanity. Also she survived, because in the midst of separation she experienced union within her heart and mind. The bliss of union overshadowed the suffering of separation, because the internal union of mind with mind, heart with heart and soul with soul in separation is much more intense and enjoyable than the outer union of body with body and senses with senses.

The Shastras say that in *prem* or divine love there is no separation. Sri Krishna says that separation intensifies *prem*, therefore He appears and disappears

before His devotees.¹ When *prem* is intense, Krishna is automatically drawn towards the devotee as iron is automatically drawn towards magnet.² Visvanath Chakravarti says that intensified *prema* not only draws Krishna, but Krishna with His *dham*, *parikaras* and *lila* to the devotee.³ Jiva Gosvami says that after Krishna had gone to Mathura, the gopis suffered separation only outwardly. Inwardly they always enjoyed His company and *Lila* which they regarded as *Sphurti*.⁴

Sphurti is a spiritual experience which appears to be like a dream, but is substantially real. This is evident from the experience of Shachi, as described by Mahaprabhu above. Vishnupriya also enjoyed Mahaprabhu's company in *Sphurti*.

¹ Bh., 10, 32, 20.

² *Madhurya Kadambani*, *Vritti* 8

³ *ibid.*

⁴ *Sri Krishna Sandarbha*, 154, 31.

CHAPTER XXVII

RUPA-SANATAN IN NILACHAL

After meeting Mahaprabhu in Prayag, Rupa reached Vrindavan. At this time Lokanath and Bhugarbha were engaged in the discovery of the holy places in Vraja. Rupa Gosvami could not meet them, because his primary concern was the release of Sanatan and his visit to Vrindavan. Mahaprabhu had already told him that he was released from the prison and would soon be arriving in Vrindavan. He was anxious to meet him. Therefore he stayed in Vraj for only a month and started with Anupam for Kashi, with a view to meet Sanatan somewhere on the way.

But he went along the bank of Ganga, while Sanatan Gosvami was going from Kashi to Vrindavan through the national highway. When Rupa reached Kashi, he was sorry to learn that Sanatan had already gone to Vrindavan. He was now at a fix. He did not know whether he should go to Vrindavan to meet Sanatan or to Nilacal to meet Mahaprabhu. He decided to go to Nilacal.

RUPA'S ARRIVAL IN NILACHAL

Rupa and Anupam started for Nilacal. They went through Gaud, because Anupam insisted that some arrangements for the maintenance of their family were yet to be finalised and they must complete them so that they might go to Nilacal with a mind free from anxiety. Unfortunately Anupam's life term came to an end and he passed away from this world soon after reaching Gaud. Rupa had to make all arrangements for the family alone. After the arrangements were completed he sent the family with Jiva, the young child of Anupam, to Bakala, and then started for Nilacal.

Like Sanatana, Rupa also, out of humility, regarded himself as untouchable, because he had served a Mohammedan king. Therefore he also thought that the only place, where he could stay in Puri, was the thatched cottage of the Mohammedan saint Haridas. He went to Haridas. Haridas received him lovingly with open arms and said, "Rupa, we knew that you were coming. You are so fortunate. Mahaprabhu has been anxiously waiting for you. He was never tired of talking of you and eulogizing you."

Mahaprabhu used to go to the cottage of Haridas every day. The next day when he went, he was overwhelmed with joy to see Rupa. He gave him a warm embrace and, after making necessary enquiries about his welfare, sat down to talk with him. They talked long about the only subject they loved to talk about — the divine *lila* of Radha and Krishna.

Ratha-Yatra was soon to begin. Many of Mahaprabhu's devotees and followers had come from Gaud on the occasion with the ostensible purpose of participating in Ratha-Yatra, but with the real purpose of having the *darshan* and company of Mahaprabhu. One day Mahaprabhu brought them all to the cottage of Haridas. After embracing Rupa, he said to Nityanand and Advaitacharya, his foremost followers, "At Krishna's call Rupa has come here after renouncing the world. Both of you bless him, so that he may pave the way for the deliverance of the *jivas* of this world by compiling works relating to Krishna-bhakti-rasa." They gave him the best of their love and blessings.

Like Haridas Rupa also did not go to the temple of Jagannath for *darshan*, because he regarded himself as unworthy and untouchable. He contented himself by having the *darshan* of its summit from a distance. He also enjoyed the dance and *kirtan* of Mahaprabhu and his *lila* with his devotees from a distance. Mahaprabhu sent *mahaprasad* for both of them everyday. After taking *mahaprasad* they engaged themselves in *bhajan* – Haridas in *japa* and Rupa in the compilation of works relating to *bhakti-rasa*.

VIDAGDH-MADHAV AND LALIT-MADHAV

Rupa was a born poet. His poetry depicted marvellous combination of poetic genius, highest learning and the deepest insight into the subtleties and intricacies of *bhakti-rasa*. Even before his renunciation he had started

writing two dramas, titled *Hansadut* and *Uddhav-sandesh*. After renunciation he had started writing a drama relating to Krishna-lila and Vraja-lila. But Satyabhama, one of the principal queens of Krishna in Dvarka, appeared to him in a dream and asked him to separate the two *lilas* and write a drama on each.¹ Mahaprabhu gave him a similar advice by asking him not to take Krishna out of Vraja.² So he decided to write two separate dramas. The drama relating to *Vraja-lila* he called *Vidagdha-madhava*, and the drama relating to *Dvarka-lila*, *Lalit-madhav*. While living in Nilacal he was engaged in writing these dramas. Larger part of each of these was written in Nilacal. On returning to Vrindavan he first completed *Vidagdh-madhav* and then *Lalit-madhav*.

THE COMPANY OF SVARUP DAMODAR AND RAMANAND RAYA

For the compilation of the above works and for the other works, which Rupa Gosvami compiled later it was necessary not only to have thorough knowledge of the theory of *rasa*, but also to have direct realization of *rasa*. Mahaprabhu had already trained him in the theory during his visit to Prayag. In Nilacal he got the opportunity of living in his close proximity for a long time. It was his company that provided the necessary inspiration and enabled him to dive deep into the

¹ C. C., 3, 1, 69.

² Ibid, 66.

bottomless ocean of *rasa* and that made his own heart a reservoir of *rasa*, from which ensued the stream of *rasa-literature*, which gave a new orientation to *rasa* and laid down the path for its highest realization, hitherto unknown.

Apart from Mahaprabhu, Rupa had the good fortune of enjoying in Nilacal the company of two other persons, who were, the living embodiments of *rasa*, and who used to assist Mahaprabhu in various ways in relishing *rasa*. They were Svarup Damodar and Ramanand Raya. Rupa learnt a great deal about Vraja-lila from the company of these two Vaishnavas.

MAHAPRABHU'S EULOGY OF RUPA

At the time of Ratha-Yatra one day, when Mahaprabhu was singing and dancing before the Ratha of Jagannath he repeatedly sang the following Shlok from Kavyaprakasha:

"yah kaumaraharah sa eva hi varasta eva
caitraksapaste
cumilita malatisurabhayah prodha kadambanilah/
sa caivasmi tathapi tatra suratavyaharalilavidhau
revarodhasi vetasitarutale cetah samutkanthate//

(Cited in C. C., 2, 1, 58 from *Kavyaprakasa*, 1, 4)

The *Shlok* refers to the secret meeting of a hero and heroine of the phenomenal world before marriage. The heroine says to one of her closest Sakhis:

"*Sakhi!*, today I am reminded of my first meeting with my husband before our marriage under the Betasi tree in a sequestered nook on the bank of river Revati. Today it is the same Basanta-panchami of the month of Chaitra and the same enchanting and colourful night. Also today the breeze, laden with the sweet smell of the Malati flowers is blowing slowly as on that day. Today my husband and I are also the same. But where is that maddening joy of the first meeting? My mind is restive to meet my husband again in the same manner under the Betasi tree on the bank of Revati."

No one could understand what Mahaprabhu had in mind, when he sang this *shlok*, except Svarup Damodar. Rupa was watching Mahaprabhu, singing and dancing from a distance. He also heard the *shlok*. On returning to his cottage he composed the following *shlok*, which clearly explained the *bhav* of Mahaprabhu:

*"priyah soayam Krsnah sahacari kuruksetra
milita-stathaham sa radha tadidamubhayoh
sangama sukham/
tathapyantah khelanmadhuramurali pancanjuse
mano me kalindi-pulina-vipinaya sprhayati//*

(Cited in C.C., 2, 1, 76 from *Padyavali*, 387)

—*Sakhi!*, today I have met in Kuruksetra the same my most beloved Krishna. I am also the same Radha and the joy of our meeting is the same. Even then my heart yearns for the forests on the bank of Yamuna,

resounding with the sweet notes of the flute of Sri Krishna."

The next morning Rupa wrote the Shlok on a palm-leaf, inserted the leaf into the thatched roof of the cottage of Haridas and went to the sea to bathe. At that time came Mahaprabhu with Svarup Damodar and others. He happened to see the palm-leaf and took it out. He read the *shlok* and was ecstasized. When Rupa returned from the sea, he tenderly slapped him on the cheek and said, "Rupa! How did you come to know my mind? No one else could know it."

Svarup Damodar said, "There is nothing to be surprised at in this. It only proves that Rupa has your blessings."

"Yes, Rupa has all my blessings. I embraced and instilled my *shakti* in him. You should also explain to him the innermost secrets of *Vraj-rasa*," said Mahaprabhu.⁴

Rupa Gosvami's work on the two dramas was in progress. Mahaprabhu knew that these dramas would prove to be two great reservoirs of *rasa*, from which the devotees would draw to their heart's content and be blest. But he was anxious to look into them even before they were completed. One day as he was turning their pages, he felt very much attracted by Rupa's handwriting and began to praise it.⁵ He came across

³ C. C., 2, 8, 123-126.

⁴ C. C., 2, 1, 73-74.

⁵ C. C., 3, 1, 74.

the following *shlok* in praise of the name “Krishna”:

*“tunde tandavini ratihvitanute tundavali labdhaye/
kamakrdakadambini ghatayate karnarbudebhyah
sprham//*

*cetah prangana sangini vijayate sarvendriyanam
krtim/*

*no jane naita kiyadbhiramrtaih krsneti varna
dvayi//⁶*

—One does not know how much nectar is contained in the two letters – Krishna! As soon as they begin to dance in the mouth (like a dancing girl) one wishes that one had millions of mouths, not one. As soon as they enter the ears, one wishes that one had millions of ears, not two. As soon as they appear on the mind like one’s eternal companions, they overcome all the senses.”

Mahaprabhu was greatly inspired by the *shlok* and began to read it aloud. Haridas began to dance in ecstasy. He said, “I have read much in the *shastras* in praise of the name “Krishna” and have heard much from the saints. But this kind of praise I have neither read nor heard.”

Mahaprabhu embraced both Rupa and Haridas in exuberance of joy. But he was not satisfied with this. In order to glorify Rupa, on another day, he came to him with some of his principal companions like Svarup Damodar and Raya Ramanand, who were learned in

⁶ *Ibid*, 99.

rasa-shastra and asked Rupa to read out before them some passages from the two dramas. With great hesitation Rupa read out the portions, which Ramanand wanted to hear. Everyone was charmed to hear them. Ramanand said, "This is no poetry, but a stream of nectar flowing smoothly and gracefully. It is perfect in all respects according to the ways of the different varieties and dimensions of *prem*. It is delightful and inspiring beyond measure."⁷

Rupa had now lived in Nilacal for ten months. He was now fully equipped for the task of compiling the *bhakti-shastras*, which Mahaprabhu wanted him to perform. He had also received his blessings and the blessings of his companions. Mahaprabhu now wanted him to go to Vrindavan. So one day Rupa Gosvami took leave of him. Mahaprabhu embraced him and said. "Go and engage yourself in the tasks ahead. Compile *rasa-sastra*, rediscover the holy places of Vrindavan, preach *Krishna-bhakti* and *rasa-bhakti*. I will also go sometime to Vrindavan to see your performance."⁸

SANATAN IN NILACHAL

After meeting Mahaprabhu in Kashi Sanatan went to Vraj and applied himself to the task of discovering the holy places of Vraj, as ordained by Mahaprabhu.

⁷ C. C., 3.1 193-194.

⁸ C. C., 3.1, 218, 219.

Mahaprabhu went to Vrindavana later in the form of his Gaurgovind Sri Vigraha, which he gave to Kashisvar.

After a year it became impossible for him to bear the separation of Mahaprabhu anymore. Since Mahaprabhu had also asked him to meet him in Nilachal once, he started for Nilachal. He went through the forest of Jharikhanda. On account of the irregularity and unwholesomeness of food, which was easily available on the way, he developed eczema of a virulent type. Pus began to exude from the pores of his body. In self-condemnation he began to say to himself, "Having been in the service of a Mohammadan king I was already impure and untouchable. This disease has further added to my impurity. On account of it I will not be able to go to the temple of Jagannath. I will also not be able to go to Mahaprabhu, because Mahaprabhu lives near the temple and many devotees going to the temple of Jagannath for *darshan* and the *sevatis*⁹ of Jagannath pass from that side. If any of them gets touched by my body, it would mean an offence unknowingly committed by me. It would, therefore be proper to commit suicide by lying down under the wheels of the chariot of Jagannath at the time of Rath-Yatra. I would thus not only be relieved of the present predicament, I would also attain the lotus-feet of Lord Jagannath." With this determination he reached Nilachal. He thought that the proper place for him to stay in Nilacal was the hut of the Mohammedan recluse Thakur Haridas.

⁹ The persons responsible for the service of a deity.

Sanatan reached the *kuti* of Haridas. A little later Mahaprabhu also reached there after having the *darshan* of Jagannath. Sanatan performed obeisance to him from a distance. Mahaprabhu was overjoyed to see him and proceeded towards him with arms wide open to embrace him. As Mahaprabhu proceeded Sanatan shrunk back saying, "Prabhu! Do not touch me. I am low and sinful. I have lost my caste by serving a Mohanmedan. Besides you see pus exuding out of my body. If it touches your body, it will add to my sins."

But Mahaprabhu would not listen. He embraced him forcibly and embraced him again and again on account of exuberance of love. His body was badly smeared with pus. Sanatan's self-condemnation crossed all limit.

Mahaprabhu asked Sanatan to live with Haridas in his *kuti*.¹⁰ Sanatan never went to Jagannath's temple. Like Haridas he only made obeisance to the *chakra* of the temple every day from a distance. Mahaprabhu came to him every day with the other devotees, embraced him and conversed with him on subjects relating to *Krishna-lila*. It was impossible for Sanatan to bear that Mahaprabhu's body should be smeared with the abominable pus of his body day after day. He began to think of committing suicide in some way or other as soon as possible.

One day Mahaprabhu said to Sanatan, "Sanatan! Krishna cannot be attained by committing suicide. If

¹⁰ Cottage.

He could be attained by suicide, who would not commit suicide a thousand times to attain Him. He can be attained only by *bhajan*—by *bhakti*, and by no other means.¹¹

Sanatan was surprised to hear this from Mahaprabhu, because he had not told him anything about his resolve to commit suicide. He said, "Prabhu! You are omniscient and all-powerful. I am only a doll in your hands. I shall dance as you make me dance. But I do not know what purpose may be served by making a low and sinful creature like me live in this world."

Mahaprabhu replied, "Sanatan! You have surrendered yourself to me. Your body is my property. How can you demolish another man's property? Do you not know even this simple rule of good conduct? What kind of a man are you? Your body is my main instrument, through which I want to accomplish so many things. Vrindavan is so dear to me. I want to revive its glory by rediscovering all its *lila-sthalies*. I cannot do this, because, on account of my mother's command, I have to live here in Nilachal. I want this to be done by you. I also want you to preach Krishna-bhakti, and do so many other things. And you want to demolish the very body through which I want to do all these things."¹²

Sanatan cast his head down in shame. He gave up the idea of committing suicide.

¹¹ C. C., 3, 4, 55-56.

¹² C. C., 3, 4, 78-83.

The time of Jagannath's Rath-Yatra soon arrived. As usual many devotees arrived from Bengal. Mahaprabhu introduced Sanatan to each one of them and asked them to give their blessings to him so that he might fulfill all the great tasks entrusted to him.

Once in the month of Jyestha (June) Mahaprabhu wanted to test Sanatan. He called Sanatan at Yamesvar Tola, where he was invited for mid-day *bhiksa*. Sanatan was happy beyond measure, because he was called by Mahaprabhu. He went walking through the sandy sea-shore. The sand was hot like fire on account of the scorching heat of the mid-day sun. It burnt his feet and caused blisters. But he was so much lost in the happiness caused by Mahaprabhu's invitation that he was totally unaware of it. Mahaprabhu's attendant Govind gave him the remnants of the *mahaprasad* eaten by Mahaprabhu. After he had eaten the same he went to the place where Mahaprabhu was resting. Mahaprabhu asked him, "Sanatan, through which route did you come?"

"I came along the sea-shore."

"Along the sea-shore! Walking on the broiling sand! Why did you not come through the safe and snug path of Sinhadvara? Your feet must have got burnt and blistered. How did you come?"

"I did not feel any trouble and I am not even aware of blisters. I am unworthy of going along the Sinhadvara. The *pujaris* of Jagannath keep going and

coming from that side. Will I not commit an offence if any of them gets touched by me?"

Mahaprabhu was happy to hear this and said, "Sanatan, I know that you have the power to purify the entire universe. Even the gods would be purified by your touch. But it is the nature of a devotee to observe *maryada*.¹³ If you do not observe *maryada* who else will?"¹⁴

So saying Mahaprabhu embraced Sanatan most lovingly and parted, carrying the pus of Sanatan's body on his own as his ornament.¹⁵

Pandit Jagadanand was one of the closest and dearest companions of Mahaprabhu. He had gone to Bengal for a short while. When he returned from there he went to see Sanatan.

Sanatan said to him, "Pandit Ji! I am just now in a dilemma. You are a close confidant of Mahaprabhu. Kindly advise what I should do. Mahaprabhu embraces me every day. His golden body is smeared with the poisonous pus of my body. This causes great agony to me. I had thought of relieving myself of it by committing suicide, but Mahaprabhu has warned me against it. I do not know what I should do."

Mahaprabhu was the very life and soul of

¹³ Propriety in conduct. For a Vaishnava propriety consists in regarding himself as the lowest of the lowly and acting accordingly.

¹⁴ C. C., 3, 4, 115-132.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 133.

Jagadanand. How could he tolerate his body being smeared with the most abominable exudation of Sanatan's body everyday. His whole body shivered on hearing this. He said, "Sanatan! the simplest way of getting out of the situation is that you return to Vrindavan as soon as you can after Rath-Yatra. You have met Mahaprabhu. On the Rath-Yatra day you will see Jagannath. After that everyday that you stay here will be a day of agony to you and agony to us, who will see Mahaprabhu's body smeared with your pus. You must go to Vrindavan soon, also because the work Mahaprabhu has entrusted to you is full of great responsibility and needs your whole hearted attention."¹⁶

The next day, when Mahaprabhu came to meet Haridas and Sanatan, Haridas made obeisance to him and embraced him. Sanatan, as usual, made obeisance from a distance. Mahaprabhu, as usual, proceeded onwards to embrace him, while he receded backwards to escape. Ultimately Mahaprabhu overtook him and embraced him heartily. When Mahaprabhu sat down with both of them, Sanatan said with folded hands, "Prabhu! I am in great distress. I came here for the good of my soul. But what is now happening is just the contrary. Every day your body is smeared with the foul smelling pus of my body, which you do not hate, but which gives me great pain. This offence committed by me day after day sounds to me like the death-knell of my soul. Therefore kindly permit me to

¹⁶ C. C., 2, 4, 141-143.

return to Vrindavan soon. Pandit Jagadanand also has advised me accordingly.”¹⁷

Mahaprabhu was out of himself with rage against Jagadanand. His face became red. He shouted, “Jaga! That fry! He will advise you, who, in all matters, whether mundane or spiritual, is like his guru and who can even advise me! He has so much courage, so much vanity in him!”¹⁸

Sanatan kept on looking for some time at Mahaprabhu’s figure, fuming with rage. Then something tickled the tendermost corner of his heart and tears of love trickled down his cheeks. He held Mahaprabhu’s feet with both of his hands and said, “Prabhu! Now I know how fortunate is Jagadanand and how unfortunate I. You regard him your own and therefore you scold him and by scolding make him drink of the sweet cup of your affection. You regard me as alien and therefore you extol me and by extolling make me drink of the bitter cup of praise and regardful behaviour.”¹⁹

Mahaprabhu felt somewhat mortified. He said, “Sanatan ! Do not say like that. Jagadanand is not as dear to me as you. I scolded him, because I do not like that one should disregard decorum and not pay anyone the respect due to him. By advising a person like you, who is well versed in the Shastras and knows

¹⁷ C. C., 2, 4, 150-159.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 157-160.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 161-163.

more than any one else what is good or bed, proper or improper, he showed lack of regard for you. I extoled you because of your qualities, not because I do not regard you as my own. You do not like that I should embrace you, because you think your body is impure. But to me your body is as pure as nector, because it is *aprakrita* (transcendental). You know that at the time oif Diksa, when the disciple surrenders himself to the guru and Krishna, Krishna makes his body *chinmaya* (spiritual) like His own. It is with the *chinmaya* body that he practises *sadhana*.²⁰ Therefore I cannot describe to you the happiness I feel in embracing you. You need not think that you commit any offence, when your body touches mine. You remain here this year with a mind free from all anxiety and give me the happiness, I feel in your company. After the end of the year I shall send you to Vrindavan."²¹

As Mahaprabhu said this he embraced him. As soon as he embraced his eczema was gone and his body became radiant like gold.²²

Mahaprabhu kept Sanatan with him at Nilacal till Dolayatra (Holi festival), after which he sent him to Vrindavan. During this period he discoursed with him upon philosophical and religious subjects and completed the remaining portion of the teachings, given to him at Varanasi.

²⁰ C. C., 3, 4, 192-193.

²¹ *Ibid*, 199 - 200.

²² *Ibid*, 201.

CHAPTER XXVIII

RAGHUNATH IN NILACHAL

Some time after Raghunath had met Mahaprabhu for the second time in Shantipur, he met Nityanand Prabhu in Panihati. Nityanand blessed him and said, "You will soon find shelter under the lotus feet of Mahaprabhu."

Nityanand's blessings dispelled the clouds of despair and despondency from the heart of Raghunath. He was filled with new courage and new hope and started for home, this time with determination to fight to the finish the forces of *Maya*.

RENUNCIATION

On returning home Raghunath did not go inside. He began to live in a temple outside the house. He had nothing to do with the affairs of the family and the estate. All the time he wept and shouted, "Ha Gaur! Ha Nitai!" There was no end to the anxiety of his father and uncle to see this sudden resurgence of divine madness in him with redoubled vehemence. Their advice, cajoling and threatening were of no use. His mother said to his father, "Raghunath has gone mad.

He may run away. His running away will mean my death. So keep him bound by rope or chains."

The father replied, "What rope or chains can bind a person, who could not be bound by power and pelf similar to that of Indra and a wife beautiful like a nymph? Is his madness ordinary so that he may be bound? Nityanand has made him drink the wine of *Gaur-prem*, which is a thousand times stronger than any other wine. It is not possible for him now to stay at home. We shall have to reconcile ourselves with the thought that it is not given to us by destiny that we should have a son."

Even then the number of guards keeping a watch over Raghunath was increased and a closer watch was kept. Wherever he went a number of watchmen in disguise followed him. It was impossible for him to break their ring and escape. He was somehow biding his time in the hope that Mahaprabhu's blessing will fructify and Krishna will show him the way.

One day he passed the whole night weeping and crying, "Ha Gaur! Ha Gaur!" The watchmen themselves wept to see his condition and tried to console him. About an hour before dawn Yadunandan Acharya, the family guru, came to him and said, "Raghunath! I am in great distress."

"What is the matter Gurudev?" said Raghunath. "Let me know. I shall do all I can to help you."

"The *pujari* (priest) who used to serve the Sri Vigraha at my house, has run away. I am too old to

serve the deity. If you ask him to return and resume duty, he will have to obey. Let us go together to his house just now."

Raghunath started going with him. The watchmen did not prevent, because they thought he was going with Gurudev for some urgent work of his. On reaching the house of Yadunandan Acharya, which was on the way, he said to him, "Gurudev, you need not take the trouble of going with me. You go and rest at home. I shall presently bring the *pujari* to you."

Acharya returned home. Raghunath felt happy like a bird out of cage. After sending the *pujari* to Yadunandan Acharya, he set out for Nilachal. He did not go by the regular path, because he was afraid that his father's horsemen would pursue and catch him. He went through the forests, caring little for the wild beasts, snakes and scorpions, bushes and thorns and the dacoits. No risk could deter him, no fear could slacken his pace, because he had drunk deep of the wine of Gaur-prem and the intoxication had made him forget everything, except the lotus feet of the Lord. He covered the distance in 12 days, though the pilgrims normally took 18 days. During these 12 days he took food only on three days. On the other days he fasted.¹ He fasted as well as feasted, fasted in body, feasted in spirit on the joy, occasioned by the thought that he was at last going to attain the feet of the Lord.

¹ C. C., 3, 6, 188.

SURRENDER AT THE FEET OF THE LORD

Fatigued and famished Raghunath reached Mahaprabhu and fell prostrate before him. Mahaprabhu was sitting in a state of trance, surrounded by the devotees. His associate Mukunda Dutta saw Raghunath, reduced to a skeleton, lying before Mahaprabhu. He shouted in astonishment, "What?! Raghunath, the son of the governor of Saptagram!" and drew the attention of Mahaprabhu towards him.

On seeing Raghunath, Mahaprabhu's face radiated with joy. He lifted him up and hugged him close to his heart. Both bathed each other with tears of joy. On seeing the meeting between the *bhakta* and Bhagavan, all those present also began to shed tears.

One might ask why was Mahaprabhu so overwhelmed to see Raghunath surrendering himself at his feet. Mahaprabhu is Mahaprabhu, the Lord of Lords the Supreme Lord. Could there be any imperfection or want in him, on the fulfillment of which he felt so satisfied?"

The answer is that Mahaprabhu is perfect, yet he has a feeling of imperfection, because he is the combined incarnation of Krishna and Radha. Radha is *prem* personified. *Prem* is never satisfied with itself. It is eternally imperfect. It grows ever and ever more. The more it grows, the greater the imperfection it feels. The more it grows, the more it wants to multiply itself in diverse shapes and forms by embracing the fallen souls of the universe within its fold, by loving and

being loved by each of them. It is therefore that Mahaprabhu goes from door to door, distributing love and feels overwhelmingly satisfied each time a soul surrenders itself to him in love. Each surrendering soul is dear to him, because it quenches, in its own measure, his evergrowing thirst for love.

After a short while Mahaprabhu said, caressing Raghunath lovingly, "Raghunath! see how merciful is Krishna. At last he has brought about your release."

Raghunath replied with eyes swimming in tears and voice choked with emotion, "Prabhu! I do not know about the mercy of Krishna. I have directly felt your mercy in my heart. It is your mercy that has brought about my deliverance."

Then Mahaprabhu called Svarup Damodar and, offering Raghunath to him by hand, said "Svarup! I entrust Raghunath to you. Treat him as your son."²²

Svarup Damodar was Mahaprabhu's most intimate associate and one, who had the deepest knowledge and experience of *rasa*. Because Raghunath was a devotee of very high capability, he felt satisfied after entrusting him to his care. Raghunath started rendering private service to Mahaprabhu as the assistant of Svarup.

BEGGAR RAGHUNATH

Mahaprabhu asked Govind, his attendant, to take care of Raghunath and feed him well, because he had

²² C. C., 3, 6, 202.

become too weak on account of the strain of the long journey and fasting for a number of days. Raghunath took his food from Govind for five days. After that he started going to Sinhadvar,³ where he stood for some time for *bhiksa* like a beggar. He did not beg for anything from anyone, but accepted whatever people gave him to eat of their own. If on any day no one gave him anything, he fasted.

One day Mahaprabhu asked Govind, "Doesn't Raghunath take his *prasad* here these days?"

Govind replied, "No, he goes to Sinhadvar and accepts whatever people give him without asking for anything."

"He does well," said Mahaprabhu. "For a *vairagi*,⁴ who depends on any particular person or wants to eat good things out of greed, does not attain Krishna."

PRECEPTS OF MAHAPRABHU

One day Raghunath said to Svarup Damodar, "I have been here for so many days, but Mahaprabhu has not yet told me anything about *sadhana*. Kindly request him on my behalf to tell me how I should proceed in *sadhana*."⁵

When Svarup Damodar said this to Mahaprabhu in Raghunath's presence, he laughed and said, "Svarup

³ The outer gate of Jagannath Temple.

⁴ One who has renounced the world.

⁵ Religious practice.

will tell you everything about *sadhyā*⁶ and *sadhan*, because he knows more than me. But if you want to listen from me, I shall tell you everything in nutshell."

Then he said as follows:

"Do not listen or talk about worldly affairs. Do not eat or dress well. Do not seek honour. Always chant the name of the Lord. In *smarana* (contemplation) always serve Radha-Krishna in Vraj!"⁷

Thus Mahaprabhu instructed Raghunath in both, the external and internal aspects of *raganuga-sadhana* – externally chanting the name, internally serving Radha-Krishna in contemplation. He asked Svarup to explain to him everything in detail.

GLOOM IN SAPTAGRAM

After Raghunath's renunciation clouds of gloom and distress gathered over the palace of Hiranya and Govardhan. Nothing could be heard there except the wail and cry of Raghunath's young wife and his mother. Hiranya and Govardhan knew that Raghunath had gone to Nilachal and surrendered himself completely at the feet of Sri Chaitanya, after which there was no chance of his returning home. Shivanand Sen, who was a close associate of Mahaprabhu and used to carry every year the devotees of Bengal to

⁶ The end to be achieved by *sadhan*.

⁷ C. C., 3, 6, 236-237.

Nilachal for the *darshan* of Mahaprabhu at his own expense, had just returned from Nilachal. They sent a man to him to enquire about Raghunath.

He said, "Raghunath lives with Mahaprabhu and serves him day and night under the guidance of Svarup Damaodar. Who does not know Raghunath? He is the life and soul of all the devotees of Mahaprabhu. He chants the name of the Lord all the time, caring little for food or clothing or anything else. At about 10 o'clock at night he goes and stands at the main gate of Jagannath's temple. He lives on the scraps pilgrims dole out to him at that time. If no one gives anything he fasts. His *vairagya* (asceticism) is intense. No one can help weeping to see his *vairagya*."

The messenger went back and reported everything to Hiranya and Govardhan. Their hearts broke. Raghunath, who was brought-up like a prince, was living like a recluse. No, he cannot bear this. He must be persuaded to give up the asceticism, they thought. Next time, when Shivanand Sen went to Nilachal, he sent with him a Brahmin cook and servant and four hundred rupees for Raghunath, so that he might live comfortably.

RAGHUNATH INVITES MAHAPRABHU AT HIS KUTI

Raghunath did not accept anything. But he started inviting Mahaprabhu for *prasad* twice a month. He took only as much from the servants, who remained

in Nilachal with the money, as was necessary for entertaining Mahaprabhu⁸.

This continued for two years, after which he suddenly stopped inviting Mahaprabhu. After sometime Mahaprabhu said to Svarup; "Svarup! Raghunath is not inviting me now. Why?"

Svarup knew Raghunath's mind. He said, "Prabhu! Raghunath had begun to think that inviting you with your devotees every month gave him a place of honour amongst the devotees, which strengthend his egoism. Besides he knows that you do not like to eat the food prepared with provisions purchased out of the money of a worldly person, but you accept his invitation out of courtesy."

Mahaprabhu laughed and said, "Eating the food of a worldly minded man makes the mind impure. With impure mind Krishna-bhajan is not possible. I could not decline Raghunath's invitation out of courtesy. I am glad that he has discontinued it of his own."⁹

FURTHER INTENSIFICATION IN VAIRAGYA

Raghunath used to serve Mahaprabhu and Svarup Damodar throughout the day. At night he went and stood at Simhadvar for *bhiksa*. His *bhajan* was

⁸ According to the account given in *Chaitanya Charitamrita* the two meals cost him only 2 annas, that is, one eighth of a rupee.

⁹ C. C., 3, 6, 278-280.

becoming more and more intense and so was his *vairagya*. After sometime he developed aversion to *ayachakavritti*.¹⁰ He said to himself, "Is it proper to remain standing at Simhadvar in the expectation of *bhiksa*? Mahaprabhu says that the *sadhak* should not depend on anyone. But there is complete dependence in this kind of *bhiksa*. Even though I do not ask for anything from anyone, in my mind I think, 'This man is coming. He gave me *bhiksa* yesterday, he may give again today. That other man, who is coming, never gave me anything, he may give today. Yet another man is coming, he may give something. He gave, but hardly enough to satisfy my hunger. I shall have to remain standing here for some time more.' Thus I continue to think about the passers-by. Sometimes I get *bhiksa* early, sometimes after a long time. During this period my mind remains occupied with the thought of *bhiksa* and *bhajan* is not possible. What is the use of this kind of *ayachakavritti*? Is it not better to go and beg for food from a *ksetra*, where food is distributed to beggars at a particular time?"

Accordingly he gave up the practice of going to Saimhadvar for *bhiksa*. He started begging from a *ksetra*. One day Mahaprabhu, who remained generally absorbed in *mahabhav*, asked his devotees, "How is Raghunath? Is he still on *ayachakavritti*?"

Someone said, "He has stopped going to

¹⁰ Depending on *bhiksa*, without asking for anything from anyone.

Simhadvar. He sits by the side of beggars in a *ksetra* and eats."

Mahaprabhu said, "He has done well. It is better to go and beg for food in a *ksetra* than to go to Simhadvar and remain standing there for long in the expectation that the passers-by will see and give bhiksa. This is *veshyavritti*."¹¹

The sight of the heir-apparent of Saptagram eating at the *ksetra* with beggars sent a shiver down the spine of the people of Puri. But this was not the end of Raghunath's *vairagya*. After sometime he began to think that the food distributed at the *ksetra* was also contaminated, because it was financed by a worldly person. Besides here also he had to depend on the *ksetra* and Mahaprabhu had said that dependence was an obstacle in *Krishna-bhajan*. He discovered a new way of satisfying his hunger, which was free from these defects.

The *mahaprasad* of Jagannath was sold by shopkeepers near the temple of Jagannath. The *mahaprasad*, which could not be sold and became rotten was thrown by them before the cows near the temple. Some of it was eaten by them, some left, because of its bad smell. Raghunath picked the *mahaprasad* left by the cows. He washed it several times to remove the rotten external part and ate the inner portion by mixing some salt with it.¹²

¹¹ The mental attitude of a prostitute. *Ibid*, 284.

¹² C. C., 3, 6, 315-318.

Svarup kept a close watch over the activities of Raghunath. When he came to know about this stage of his *vairagya*, he felt happy and proud of him. One night he reached his *kuti*, when he had washed the *mahaprasad*. He said, "Raghunath! You eat this ambrosial food every day and never give it to me." As he said this he extended his hand, took a handful from the *prasad* and put it in his mouth. Could there be a better way of appreciating the *vairagya* of his god-son?

Omniscient Mahaprabhu knew everything. But in order to glorify his devotee he asked Svarup one day, "Svarup! How is your Raghu doing?"

With a throat choked with emotion Svarup narrated the story of Raghu's *vairagya*. Mahaprabhu was pleased beyond measure to hear that. Tears of love and joy began to flow from his eyes. Immediately he went to the *kuti* of Raghunath with Svarup. Raghunath had just washed the *mahaprasad*, mixed salt in it and kept it on a banana leaf for eating. Mahaprabhu saw the *mahaprasad* and said delightfully to Raghunath, "Raghunath! How selfish you are! You eat such heavenly food every day and never offer it to me." So saying he took a morsel of the *prasad* and put it into his mouth. He was quickly going to snatch another morsel, when Svarup held his hand and said, "Prabhu! This is not fit for you."¹³

¹³ *Ibid.* 322-323.

Mahaprabhu said, "No, no. Svarup, I take different kinds of *prasad* every day, but never find such taste."

Raghunath's *vairagya* was not *sushka* (dry) *vairagya* or *vairagya* for its own sake, which Mahaprabhu always condemned. It was not strained, but the natural outcome of his *Krishna-prem*. Therefore Mahaprabhu was very happy with him and loved him with all his heart. He wanted to present something to him as a token of his love for him. He wondered what he could present to please him. There was nothing in the three worlds that could please him. He had, however, two small but valuable things. He thought they would certainly make him feel happy and blest. They were a *Govardhan-shila*¹⁴ and *Gunja-mala*,¹⁵ which a devotee named Sankaranand Sarasvati had brought from Vrindavan and given to him. For three years he had served the *Govardhan-shila* as Krishna. At the time of *smarana* (meditation on Krishna) he wore the *Gunja-mala* round his neck and *shila* he placed over his head, over his eyes or close to his heart. Both of them he bathed with the tears of his eyes. He presented them to Raghunath and said, "You serve this *shila* daily with water and *Tulasi*-

¹⁴ A piece of stone from the Govardhan hill. Govardhan and every part of it is regarded as identical with Krishna and worshipped as such.

¹⁵ A garland of Gunja. Gunja is a red and black berry borne by a small shrub. It forms the smallest of a jeweller's weight and is commonly called *ratti*.

manjari. The *shila* will bestow *Krishna-prem* upon you.”¹⁶

There was no end to Raghunath’s happiness on receiving these two things, which Mahaprabhu had bathed with his tears of love for three years. He thought¹⁷ that by giving *Govardhan-shila* Mahaprabhu had given him Krishna and by giving the *Gunja-mala* he had given him the lotus-feet of Radha:

*sila diya gosain samarpila govardhana/
gunja-mala diya dila radhika-charana//*¹⁸

(C.C., 3, 6, 307)

Mahaprabhu had asked Raghunath to serve the *shila* by offering only water and *Tulasi-manjari*. Though it is true that the Govardhan-shila is fully satisfied by this kind of service, Svarupa asked Raghunath to add to the offering some *khaja*,¹⁹ which he asked Govinda to supply every day. Raghunath thus served the *shila* lovingly. It is said that at the time of service the *shila* appeared to him as Krishna.

*Ei mata raghunath karena pujana/
puja kale dekhe shilaya vrajendraNandna//*

¹⁶ C. C., 3, 6, 288-297.

¹⁷ C. C., 3, 6, 306.

¹⁸ Visvanath Cakravarti says in his commentary on the above that by giving these things to Raghunath, Mahaprabhu instructed him to do *bhajan* of Radha-Krishna. It was, therefore, that in later years he went and lived in Radhakunde

¹⁹ A sweetmeat.

SIXTEEN YEARS IN NILACHAL

Raghunath pursued an incredibly hard line in *sadhana*. *Chaitanya-Charitamrita* says that out of the twenty-four hours he spent twenty-two and a half in *kirtan* and *smarana* and only an hour and a half in sleeping and eating.²⁰ The rules and regulations he had laid down for his *sadhana* were inviolable. They were like a line deeply engraved on stone, which could not be wiped off by any means:—

*ananta guna raghunathera ke karibe lekha/
raghunathera niyama jena pasanera rekha//
sade sat prahara jaya jahar smarane/
sade chari danda ahara nidra kona dine//*

(C.C., 3, 6, 309-310.)

Raghunath lived in Nilachal for sixteen years. During this period he saw the *lila* of Mahaprabhu with his own eyes or heard about it from Svarup Damodar. During the day he remained with Mahaprabhu and saw everything himself. What happened at night he came to know from Svarup Damodar, who was Mahaprabhu's closest associate and remained with him at night as long as he was awake. Later he passed on the treasure of the *lila*, he concealed in his heart, to

²⁰ Some other saints of Vraja in more recent times are known to have slept only an hour or two. See the author's "The Saints of Vraja".

his disciple Krishnadas Kaviraj, who in turn bestowed that valuable gift to the society in the form of *Chaitanya-Charitamrita*.

After sixteen years Mahaprabhu suddenly disappeared from the world. Svarup could not bear his separation. He also left the body. How could Raghunath live in Nilachal in the absence of both. He went to Vrindavan.

CHAPTER XXIX

JAGADANAND'S LOVE WRANGLES WITH MAHAPRABHU

Jagadanand Pandit was wholly and exclusively devoted to Mahaprabhu. He was one of his closest associates. He was not very intelligent and was by nature irate. But he was very simple at heart. Krishna Das Kaviraj describes him as the incarnation of Satyabhama.¹

Jagadanand felt very unhappy to see the asceticism of Mahaprabhu. He wanted that he should live comfortably. But Mahaprabhu followed the principles of Sannyas strictly and showed apathy to all objects of comfort and luxury. This often gave rise to love wrangles between them. Jagadanand became indignant like Satyabhama and Mahaprabhu had to appease him.²

Jagadanand could not live without Mahaprabhu. He was with him throughout in Navadvip. When Mahaprabhu took Sannyas and went to Nilachala, he was one of the four persons, whom he permitted to go with him. When Mahaprabhu was to go to the South, the devotees proposed that he take Jagadanand

¹ C. C., 1, 10, 19.

² *ibid.* 3, 12, 152.

with him. Mahaprabhu said, "Jagadanand does not like my *vairagya* (asceticism). I have to do what he says. If I don't, he becomes angry and expresses his anger by going without food and water. Therefore I will not take him with me." When Mahaprabhu started for the South with Krishna Das, Jagadanand fell senseless on the ground.

JAGADANAND'S ANGER AND MAHAPRABHU

After Mahaprabhu returned from the South to Nilachal, he often sent Jagadanand to Navadvip to convey to his mother the message regarding his welfare. Once when Jagadanand returned from Navadvip, he brought with him a pitcher full of sandal oil. He gave it to Govind and said, "Apply this to Mahaprabhu's head. It will have a cooling effect." He did not like Mahaprabhu wailing in *Viraha*.³ Dull as he was, he thought that the oil would keep his head cool and he would not weep and wail.

Govind knew that Mahaprabhu would not accept the oil. But he also knew how dear Jagadanand was to him and how much he feared his anger. Therefore he took the oil. Next day he gathered courage and said to Mahaprabhu, "Jagadanand has with great difficulty brought a pitcher of sandal oil from Navadvip for massaging your head. It will make you feel cool and comfortable."

³ Pain in separation from Krishna.

Mahaprabhu became grave and said, "Oil for a Sannyasi and that too scented! Send that oil to the temple of Jagannath to be used in Jagannath's lamp."¹

Govind feared that if he told Jagadanand about this, his reaction might be painful to Mahaprabhu. But he had to tell him. Jagadanand felt very much aggrieved though he did not say anything. Ten days passed. Still his grief could be known from his face. Therefore, once again, when Govind was massaging Mahaprabhu's feet he said to him, "Prabhu! Jagadanand keenly desires that I should massage your head with the oil brought by him."

Mahaprabhu retorted angrily, "Yes, I have become a Sannyasi for this luxury. Engage a massager, too."

The next day, when Jagadanand went to Mahaprabhu for his *darshan*, Mahaprabhu said, "Pandit! You have with so much trouble brought the sandal oil from Navadvip. I cannot use it. You give it to Jagannath to be used in the lamp of the temple."

Jagadanand was red with anger. He said in a tone trembling with rage, :Who told you that I have brought oil for you from Navadvip? He is a liar." Then he went where Govind had kept the pitcher of oil, brought it out and threw it on the floor in front of Mahaprabhu. The pitcher was broken, the oil spread and filled the courtyard with its fragrance.²

¹ C.C., 3, 12, 107-108.

² C.C., 3, 12, 120-121.

Then Jagadanand went to his house, closed the door from inside and remained there for three days without eating even a morsel of food or drinking a cup of water. He expressed his anger in the same way in which a devoted wife does, when a thing lovingly presented by her to her dear husband is unceremoniously rejected by him. Mahaprabhu tried to appease Jagadanand in the same manner in which the husband does to appease the anger of his devoted wife. On the third day he went and stood at Jagadanand's door and said in a loving tone, "Pandit! Get up. Start cooking. Today I shall eat at your place. Just now I am going for *darshan*. I shall return at noon."

As soon as Jagadanand heard the sweet voice of Mahaprabhu, his anger disappeared. He bathed and started cooking. He prepared different kinds of food, which Mahaprabhu relished. At noon Mahaprabhu arrived with Govind. Jagadanand washed his feet and gave him *asan* to sit. He placed before him a plantain leaf and served on it food on which Tulasi leaf had been put, but which had not been offered to the deity. Mahaprabhu looked at him and said with a smile, "Serve on another leaf for yourself. Today we shall eat together."

Jagadanand said in a loving tone, "You take. I shall eat later." Mahaprabhu started eating. After he had eaten three or four morsels he said smilingly, "Aha! I never knew that food prepared in anger is so

² ibid, 130.

delicious.”² Jagadanand said, “Prabhu! It is not I, who has cooked, but you. I have only collected the materials.”

The *bhojan-lila* of Mahaprabhu went on. Jagadanand was serving lovingly and Mahaprabhu was eating with great relish. Even when Mahaprabhu had eaten his fill, Jagadanand continued to serve. He served each time Mahaprabhu tried to get up and he had to eat, because he was afraid that Jagadanand might again get angry and go without food. At the end he looked at Jagadanand pitifully and said, “Pandit! No more. My stomach will burst. I have eaten ten times my appetite. Now no more, I pray.”

Jagadanand made Mahaprabhu wash his hands, offered a garland and applied sandal paste on his forehead. Mahaprabhu then said, “Pandit! Now you eat in my presence, so that I may be happy to see you eating.” Jagadanand said, “Prabhu! You may now go and rest. I shall eat after I have fed Ramai and Raghunath, who helped me in cooking.”

Mahaprabhu went. He was confident that Jagadanand’s anger had subsided. Even then while going he said to Govind, “Govind! You remain here. Inform me after Jagadanand has eaten.”

After Mahaprabhu had gone Jagadanand said to Govind, “Govind, you go and massage Mahaprabhu’s

² C.C., 3, 12, 130.

³ Eating.

feet. Tell him that Pandit has started eating. After he goes to sleep, you come and eat. I shall keep Mahaprabhu's *prasad* for you."

Govind went and began to massage Mahaprabhu's feet. He never concealed anything from Mahaprabhu. Therefore he said to him, "Jagadanand has not yet eaten but has conveyed that he has started eating." Mahaprabhu smiled and said, "You go at once and see whether he is eating and let me know." Govind went and came back to report that Jagadanand had eaten. Then Mahaprabhu felt satisfied and slept.¹

If we judge the conduct of Jagadanand and Mahaprabhu in this episode, we would perhaps find fault with both. Jagadanand's fault is obvious. He knew that Mahaprabhu would not use scented oil. Still he brought and tried to compel him to use it. What is even more condemnable in his behaviour is that in a fit of rage he broke the pitcher before Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu may also appear to be wrong in his appeasement of Jagadanand. He appeased him as if the fault was his and not that of Jagadanand. There should have been some consistency in his refusal to use the oil brought by him and his subsequent behaviour towards him. Jagadanand should have been rebuked rather than appeased.

But we shall misjudge, if we judge like this. We should know that our norms of behaviour do not

¹ C.C., 3, 12, 149-150.

apply to the realm of *prema* or transcendental love. *Prema* does not recognize right or wrong, consistency or inconsistency, propriety or impropriety. It recognizes only one thing and that is the happiness of the beloved. Jagadanand brought the oil for the happiness of Mahaprabhu. The consideration of his happiness made him blind and disregardful of all other considerations. The anger which made him break the pitcher of oil was not ordinary anger, but anger in love. Mahaprabhu's behaviour towards him was also conditioned by love. The question of propriety or impropriety simply did not arise. In the transcendental world love reigns supreme. Both Bhagavan and the Bhakta have to dance as love makes them dance. They have no freedom of their own. Krishna Das Kaviraja has said:

*"krishnere nachay prem bhaktere nachaya /
apani nache tine nache ek thaya //*

(C.C. 3, 18, 17)

— Prem makes Bhagavan and the *bhakta* dance and dances itself. The three dance together.”

THE MATTRESS JAGADANAND MADE FOR MAHAPRABHU

Mahaprabhu slept on dry plantain leaves spread on the floor. Jagadanand felt very much pained at heart to see him sleep on leaves. He made a mattress and a

pillow of fine cloth coloured in saffron and filled them with cotton. He knew that Mahaprabhu would not accept it. But where was the harm in trying, he thought. For him the attempt itself was enjoyable. Because there was little possibility of Govind's being able to make Mahaprabhu accept the mattress, he thought of seeking the help of Svarup. He went to him and said prayerfully, "Gosain! Today, when Mahaprabhu goes to bed, you kindly make him sleep on the mattress prepared by me."

Svarup Gosain also feared Jagadanand. He could not but agree. At bed time he spread that mattress for Mahaprabhu to sleep on. When Mahaprabhu saw the mattress he said with a frown, "Who made this?" Svarup replied, "Jagadanand." Then Mahaprabhu did not say anything, but he kept the mattress aside and slept on the plantain leaves as usual. When Jagadanand heard about this, he felt very much disappointed and pained. But he thought of another device. He collected many dry plantain leaves, tore them with his fingernails so as to reduce them into threads. He took two *bahirvases* of Mahaprabhu and spread the threads between them. In this way he made for him one mattress and one quilt to be used in winter. Mahaprabhu had to accept them.

JAGADANAND IN SEPARATION FROM MAHAPRABHU

Mahaprabhu's *vairagya* went on increasing and with

that Jagadanand's grief. Jagadanand felt aggrieved, because Mahaprabhu did not listen to him and suffered. At the end, when his grief became unbearable, he asked for his permission to go to Vrindavan. He did not permit, because he could not live without him. He said, "You want to go to Vrindavan, because you are displeased with me and you ask for my permission. How can I permit?"

Jagadanand tried to convince him that he did not want to go because he was displeased with him, but because he had long desired to see the holy places connected with the Lila of Sri Krishna. Mahaprabhu was not convinced. At last Jagadanand took the help of Svarup. Svarup said to Mahaprabhu, "Jagadanand really longs from his heart to have the *darshan* of the holy places connected with the Lila of Sri Krishna. Why not permit him? He often goes to Navadvip. So he can once go to Vrindavan." Mahaprabhu agreed. He called Jagadanand and said in a loving tone, "Go to Vrindavan if you must. Seek the company of Sanatan. Respect the Vrajavasis, but do not go very near them, because their attitude and loving behaviour towards Sri Krishna are unique and incomprehensible. We must not imitate them. Do not live there long. Return soon."¹

Jagadanand went. Even when he started going, he began to feel the pang of separation. How he felt in separation from Mahaprabhu while going to

¹ C.C., 3, 13, 35-38.

Vrindavan, he has described in detail in his work titled *Prema-vivarta*. The following is the English rendering of an excerpt from the same:

“Gaur! Gaur! Gaur!
 I have left Thy feet,
 I am going to Vrindavan.
 Leaving Thy company sweet.
 The desire arose in my mind
 To see Vrindavan
 I do not know why.
 Now without seeing Thee
 I weep and cry.
 I want to die, But sitting in my heart
 Thou would not let me die.
 Death will not come
 Survival will mean quarrel.
 I am at my wit’s end.
 I do not know what to do.”

We need not, however, have any misgivings regarding Jagadanand’s inner state of mind. His condition is pitiable from outside; it is enviable from inside. Inside his state is that of *prema-vivarta* in which his mind, heart and soul have become one with the mind, heart and soul of Gaur. His separation from Gaur is apparent. He is now nearer to him than he was ever before. In *viraha*,⁵ the devotee suffers separation from outside, but enjoys union from inside. The union in *viraha* is deeper.

⁵ State of separation.

On reaching Vrindavan Jagadanand began to enjoy the company of Sanatan Gosvami. Sanatan Gosvami considered himself fortunate to find the company of a devotee like Jagadanand. He enjoyed hearing from him the stories regarding the Lila of Mahaprabhu.

Sanatan Gosvami had heard about Jagadanand's inimitable love for Gaur. He desired to have a direct experience of it. He got an opportunity, when one day Jagadanand invited him to dinner. He went with a *bahirvas* of saffron colour wrapped round his head. Jagadanand thought that that must be a *prasadi* cloth¹ of Mahaprabhu.⁶ He was happy to see it. He said, "Sanatan! When did you get this *prasadi* cloth from Mahaprabhu?" Sanatan replied, "I did not get it from Mahaprabhu, but from a Sannyasi, named Mukund Sarasvati." Jagadanand was wild with rage to hear this. He said, "You are a principal associate of Mahaprabhu and you go about with the cloth of another Sannyasi on your head. This is your devotion to¹ Mahaprabhu!" As he said this he lifted from the oven the pot containing rice and was going to hit Sanatan with it,² when Sanatan smiled and said, "Pandit! I beg your pardon. I desired to see your devotion towards Mahaprabhu. That is why I played this drama. I consider myself fortunate to have learnt from you what exclusive devotion to Sri Chaitanya means."

¹ Cloth used by Mahaprabhu.

² C.C., 3, 13, 53.

Jagadanand felt ashamed and put the pot back on the oven.

Jagadanand's love for Sri Chaitanya had made him blind to the extent that he became violent even against a guest like Sanatan.

CHAPTER XXX

THE PASSING AWAY OF HARIDAS AND OTHER EPISODES

THE PASSING AWAY OF HARIDAS

Haridas became old, still he continued to do Harinam *japa* three lac times a day. One day when Govind went to Haridas with the *prasad* of Jagannath, he saw that he was lying down and doing Harinam slowly, not loudly, as usual. He said, "Haridas! Get up and take *prasad*." Haridas got up and said, "Today I shall fast, because I have not been able to complete *nam-japa*. "¹ Then, in order to respect *prasad*, he put a single piece of rice into his mouth and lay down again.

The next day Mahaprabhu came and asked, "Haridas! How is your health?"

Haridas replied, "Prabhu! The body is healthy, but not the mind. On account of old age I cannot complete the number of *japa*."

Mahaprabhu was happy to hear this. His heart melted. But trying to conceal his *bhav*, he said

¹ C. C., 3, 11, 15-10

"Haridas! You are a Siddha Mahapurush. You are born for the good of the world and you have been doing three lac Nam-japa only to set an example for others. Now that you are old, you can reduce the number of *japa*."²

Haridas felt very much hurt to hear his praise. Weeping aloud he fell at the feet of Mahaprabhu and said, "Prabhu! Do not say like that. I am too low and undeserving. You are Bhagavan and the master of Your will. You make everyone dance as You will. You are also making me dance at Your will. Then why do You hurt me by my praise?"³

Mahaprabhu felt unhappy at heart to hear what Haridas said in utter humility. He kept on looking at his melancholy face with eyes swimming in tears.

Then Haridas said in voice choked with emotion, "Prabhu! I have to make a request. I know that You will withdraw Your Lila. Give me the boon that I do not live to see that day and die soon."

Mahaprabhu was shocked. He said with tears streaming out of his eyes and throat choked with emotion, "Haridas! What do you say? If you go away, how shall I live? Why are you so cruel as to deprive me of the pleasure of your company? Who is there, whom I can call my own except my devotees like you?"

² *ibid*, 23-24

³ *ibid*, 25-29

Haridas said, "Prabhu! Do not delude me by saying so. There are crores of Mahapurushas to assist You in Your Lila. What will you lose, if an insect like me dies?" With this he fell at the feet of Mahaprabhu and began to weep. Then resting his head upon his feet, he said in a trembling voice, "Prabhu! This insect undeservedly aspires after one more favour. Listen, it wants to die with Your lotus feet on its breast, looking at your moon-like face and chanting your sweet name. Do you give this boon? Tell me."⁴

Just like moon, suddenly covered by clouds, Mahaprabhu's face suddenly became dark. He could not say anything. For a long time he continued to think with head cast downwards. Then with a sigh he said in a low voice, "Haridas! Whatever your desire, Krishna cannot but fulfil. But I am thinking how I shall live without you." He said this and became silent. After sometime he shrieked out 'Haridas! Haridas!' and weeping threw his arms round him. The whole body of Haridas was drowned in his tears and a thrill passed through his spine on account of his touch, causing horripilation, tremor and the other Sattvik-bhavas.

After Mahaprabhu had thus indicated that his desire would be fulfilled, Haridas was at peace. He said, "Prabhu! It is now mid-day. So you may go. Kindly give *darshan* tomorrow after having the

⁴ *ibid*, 30-35

darshan of Jagannath." Mahaprabhu understood that Haridas wanted his desire to be fulfilled the next day.⁵

The next morning, after *darshan* of Jagannath, Mahaprabhu reached the hermitage of Haridas with Svarup Damodar, Raya Ramanand, Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya, Vakreshvar Pandit and others, who did not know why Mahaprabhu was taking them all with him. But they felt certain that some special Lila was going to be manifested. As soon as Mahaprabhu reached the hermitage, he said to Haridas, "Haridas! What news?" Haridas said, "Prabhu! The servant is ready." No one could understand the implication except Mahaprabhu and Haridas. As Haridas said 'The servant is ready', he went out into the courtyard and made obeisance to Mahaprabhu and the other devotees. On account of weakness he could not stand. Therefore Mahaprabhu made him sit comfortably and started dance and *kirtan* round him with the devotees. Svarup and Vakreshwar danced while Mahaprabhu and others sang. Hairdas was taking the dust of their feet and rubbing it all over his body. He requested Mahaprabhu to come near. Mahaprabhu sat down near him. Haridas caught hold of his foot with both hands and planted it firmly on his heart. Mahaprabhu did not object. Holding the feet of Mahaprabhu with his hands, and looking at his face with eyes swimming in tears, he shouted 'Gaurang!' and left the body.⁶

⁵ *ibid*, 37-42

⁶ C. C., 3, 11, 52-55

The devotees were all taken aback to see his passing away like Bhishma Pitamah. At first they did not believe that he had actually passed away. But when they became certain they cried aloud 'Haribol!' Their cry rent the sky.

Mahaprabhu's state of mind at the moment was strange. He was swinging between sorrow and happiness. He was happy over the devotee's conquest of death. He was sorry to have suddenly lost a devotee, of whom he was so proud and whose *darshan* every day, after the sea-bath, gave Him greater satisfaction than the bath. He took the dead body of Haridas in his lap and began to dance. As he danced the Ganga-Yamuna of tears of love, incessantly flowing from his eyes, bathed the body of Haridas.⁷

No one, who has before his mind's eye this image of Mahaprabhu dancing with the dead body of Haridas, would say that Bhagavan is formless, attributeless, self-sufficient and self-contented, that He had neither father, nor mother, nor brother, nor friend nor anyone with whom He had any attachment. The devotee is His father, mother, friend and everything. He depends wholly upon His devotees for His Lila and for the enjoyment of different kinds of Rasa. He is incomplete without His devotees. Each devotee is to Him His heart and soul. On finding Him, He feels that He has found all the wealth of the three worlds, on losing him He feels that He has lost everything. His love towards

⁷ *ibid*, 58-59

His devotee is unlimited. Not that His love is distributed amongst His numberless devotees. His love is unlimited for each. Is this not evident from His dance with the dead body of Haridas? Haridas had said to Him that He had crores of devotees to assist Him in His Lila, and that He would lose nothing, if an insect like him died. Mahaprabhu alone knew what loss He had suffered by losing him.

After the dance Mahaprabhu started eulogising and glorifying Haridas. In this way he tried to alleviate to some extent the suffering of his heart. Then the devotees carried the body of Haridas towards the sea with dance and *kirtan*. After the body was bathed in the sea, Mahaprabhu said, "From today the sea has become a great Tirtha.⁸

Then the devotees dug the Samadhi on the bank. They adorned the body of Haridas with sandal paste and garlands, took his *charanamrita* and laid him in the Samadhi. Mahaprabhu with his own hands covered the Samadhi with sand. Then he circumambulated the Samadhi with the devotees dancing and doing *kirtan*.⁹

After that all bathed in the sea, circumambulated the Samadhi again and proceeded to the temple of Jagannath singing *kirtan* and dancing. On the Sinhadvar of the temple are the shops of grocers. Mahaprabhu went to them and spreading his *bahirvas*

⁸ *ibid*, 63, 67-69

⁹ *ibid*, 70-79

before them asked for *bhiksa* for the festival to celebrate the conquest of death by Haridas and his smooth passing away to the eternal land of the eternal Lila of Radha-Krishna. The grocers began to give *bhiksa* freely and bountifully. The devotees shouted painfully to see Mahaprabhu himself asking for *bhiksa*. Svarup beckoned to the grocers with a gesture of hand not to give him *bhiksa* and said to him with folded hands, "Prabhu! You proceed to your place. We shall collect *bhiksa* and bring to you."

Prabhu looked at Svarup and cried out like a helpless child, as if to say "Svarup! You are grievously hurting me by asking me not to collect *bhiksa* for the festival of my dear Haridas." But how could the devotees see him going from shop to shop and asking for *bhiksa* in their presence? Mahaprabhu had to move to his residence with a sad heart.

Within a short time mountains of provisions for the festival reached the residence of Mahaprabhu. Baninath on his own behalf and Raj-guru Kashi Misra on behalf of Maharaja Pratapurudra also sent the provisions in huge quantity. A grand feast was arranged. Mahaprabhu himself started serving. He began to serve huge quantity of *prasad* to each person. But since no one wanted to eat unless Mahaprabhu also sat down to eat, Svarup made him sit down with great insistence. Mahaprabhu was eating with the Vaishnavas and from time to time doing *kirtan* to eulogise and glorify Haridas amidst the cries of 'Haribol' by the Vaishnavas.

When the festival was over Mahaprabhu offered *chandan*¹⁰ and garland to each Vaishnava and said, by way of giving a boon to everyone, "Those who have witnessed the passing away of Haridas, those who have participated in dance and *kirtan* on this occasion, and those who have dined in this festival, will all soon attain the lotus feet of Krishna." After this he raised both of his hands, looked at the Vaishnavas with eyes swimming in tears and started the following *kirtan*—

"*Jai, Jai, Jai Haridas*
Namere mahiman je karila prakasl

(C.C., 3, 11, 98)

—Jai, Jai, Jai Haridas
Who glorified the Name of the Lord."

PRADYUMN MISRA AND RAYA RAMANAND

Ramanand was known as a great Rasik. What kind of Rasik he was is evident from a particular episode relating to his meeting with Pradyumna Misra. Pradyumna Misra was a resident of Srihatta and a member of the family to which Mahaprabhu belonged. He was proud of his caste, family and learning. He once visited Puri. He went straight to Mahaprabhu and said, "Prabhu! Kindly tell some Krishna-Katha." Mahaprabhu understood that it was on account of his pride that he had gone directly to him, ignoring his

¹⁰ Sandal paste

devotees. He said, "You are fortunate because you are interested in Krishna-katha. But I do not know Krishna-katha. Ramanand knows. I hear Krishna-katha from him. You also hear from him."

Pradyumna went to Ramanand. His servants told him that Ramanand was busy training the Devadasis in dance, music and acting in connection with his own drama '*jagannath Vallabha*', which he wanted to stage. On hearing this Pradyumna got prejudiced against him. He began to wonder why Mahaprabhu had sent him to him for hearing Krishna-katha. He was thinking like that when Ramananda came. He made obeisance to him and said, "You have perhaps been waiting since long. No one informed me. Please do not take offence. Let me know what service I can do to you."

Pradyumna said, "No service. I came to Nilachal and I thought I might have your *darshan*. I am purified by your *darshan*." With this he took leave of him.

The next day, when he went to Mahaprabhu, Mahaprabhu said, "Did you hear Krishna-katha?" Pradyumna cast his head down and spoke out his mind. Mahaprabhu was pleased by his outspokenness and said, "It is difficult to understand Ramanand. He is a *Siddha-Mahapurush* and the very image of Raganuga Bhakti of the highest order. He regards the young and beautiful Devadasis as worshippable, because they serve Jagannath. He bathes them, dresses them and adorns them with ornaments with his own hands. He also teaches them to express various kinds of *bhav* in

acting. Still not the slightest shadow of impurity touches his mind, because his mind, body and senses are all spiritual. No one, except him has this capacity. If you want to hear Krishna-*katha*, you go to him again and tell him that I have sent you to him."

Pradyumna again went to Ramanand and said, "Mahaprabhu has sent me to hear Krishna-*katha* from you."

Ramananda said, "it is a matter of great fortune to me that you have come to listen Krishna-*katha* from me at the insistence of Mahaprabhu." Then he took him to a private spot and began to say Krishna-*katha*. The speaker and the listener were both drowned in Krishna-*katha-rasa* to such an extent that they lost outward consciousness. The *katha* went on and did not end even after nine hours, when the servants of Ramanand came and said, "Swami! The sun is setting." Then they regained outward consciousness. Ramanand was ashamed to realize that he had detained the Brahmin so long without food and drink. He apologized to him and bade him farewell with respect.

RAGHUNATH BHATT IN NILACHAL

Raghunath Bhatt, the son of Tapan Misra was young, when Mahaprabhu visited Kashi. But he got an opportunity to listen to his teachings to Tapan Misra, to massage his feet and to eat his *prasad*. After Mahaprabhu had left Tapan made adequate arrangements for his study.

He began his study. But his mind and heart were captured by Mahaprabhu. He always pined for his *darshan* and service. He knew that there was no difference between him and His Name. Therefore he repeated His Name day and night and said, "Oh! When will that auspicious day be, when I will again have the *darshan* of His lotus feet?" By the grace of Mahaprabhu that day arrived, as soon as his education was completed and he became well versed in the *shastras*.

One day he came to know that some devotees were going to Puri on the occasion of Rath-Yatra. With the permission of his parents he joined them. As soon as he reached Puri, he went to Gambhira, where Mahaprabhu lived and fell at his feet, bathing them with the tears of his eyes.

Mahaprabhu said with a start, "Who, Raghunath?!" As he said this his face radiated with joy.

Raghunath said, "Yes Prabhu, your humble servant Raghunath."

He embraced and bathed him with his tears of grace.

Mahaprabhu enquired about the welfare of Tapan Misra. He made Raghunath stay with him in Gambhira that day. The next day he asked Govind to make separate arrangement for his lodging.

Raghunath stayed in Puri for eight months. During this period he enjoyed the company and ever

increasing mercy of Mahaprabhu. He was an expert cook. He often invited Mahaprabhu and gave him different dainties prepared by himself to eat. Whatever he prepared tasted like ambrosia.¹¹ After feeding Mahaprabhu, he ate his *prasad*.

After eight months Mahaprabhu sent Raghunath back to Varanasi. While bidding him farewell he said, "Raghunath, do not marry. Serve well your parents. Study *Srimad Bhagavatam* from some Vaishnav. Once again come to Nilachal." As he said this he presented his *kantha-mala* to him and embraced him. On receiving the blessings of Mahaprabhu in the shape of the *kantha-mala*¹² he began to shed tears of joy. With heart full of love and throat choked with emotion, he asked Svarup and others for permission to leave and started for Varanasi.

On reaching Varanasi he remained engaged in the service of his parents and the study of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. After four years, when his parents died, he again went to Puri and stayed there for eight months, after which Mahaprabhu said, "Raghunath, now you go to Vrindavan, live in the company of Rupa-Sanatan, read *Srimad Bhagavatm* and always chant the name of Krishna. Thus you will soon attain the lotus feet of Sri Krishna."

¹¹ C. C., 3, 13, 107.

¹² The garland of Tulasi beads Mahaprabhu used to wear round his neck.

Mahaprabhu gave him the fourteen feet long garland of Tulasi leaves and *pana-bidi*,¹³ which he had received as *prasad* from Jagannath and embraced him to infuse his *shakti* in him before he left.

SRI VALLABHACHARYA IN NILACHAL

Once when the devotees from Gaud were in Nilachal, Vallabhacharya also went there. He made obeisance to Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu embraced him and made him sit by his side. He said, "I had long been desiring to have Your *darshan*. Jagannath has fulfilled my wish today. You are no other than Sri Krishna. Your *darshan* purifies the heart and engenders Krishna-prem."¹⁴

Mahaprabhu said, "I am an ordinary *jiva* and a Mayavadi Sannyasi. What do I know of *prem* and *bhakti*? Ishvar (God) is Advaitacharya. No one compares with Him in the knowledge of the Shastras and Krishna-bhakti. By His mercy one can attain Krishna-prem. His company has purified my heart.¹⁵ Avadhut Nityanand is also Ishvar. He is always mad with Krishna-prem. Indeed He is the very ocean of Krishna-prem. Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya is the master of the six systems of philosophy. He has made known to me the essence of Bhakti-yoga. Ramanand Raya is

¹³ A roll of betel leaf containing betel nut and other things, and is chewed.

¹⁴ C. C., 3, 7, 6 - 12.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 14 - 16.

one of the foremost devotees. He taught me that *prem* is the ultimate end and Raganuga Bhakti is the highest kind of Bhakti. Svarupa Damodar is the very embodiment of Prem-rasa. He imparted to me the knowledge of Madhura-rasa and made me understand that the *prem* of the gopis of Vraja is free from lust. Lust is self-seeking, self-regarding, *prem* is selfless loving service of Krishna. Haridas is *maha-bhagavat*. He chants three lac Harinam everyday. I learnt the importance of Harinam from him. Gadadhar, Jagadanand, Damodar, Shankar, Vakreshvar, Kashishvar, Mukund, Vasudev, Murari and many others, whose company I enjoy are great Vaishnavas. Whatever Bhakti I have is due to their company."¹⁶

Krishnadas Kaviraj says that Vallabhacharya was proud of his learning. He thought that he was well-versed in Vaishnav philosophy and delivered learned discourses on Bhagavat. Mahaprabhu's eulogy of these Vaishnavs was meant to humble his pride.¹⁷ He was impressed and wanted to meet those Vaishnavs. He said, "Where do these Vaishnavs live?" Mahaprabhu said, "You will have their *darshan* here."

The next day, when all the Vaishnavs came to Mahaprabhu, he introduced them to Vallabhacharya. Vallabhacharya was surprised to see their faces radiant with a divine lustre. He prayerfully extended invitation

¹⁶ C. C., 3, 7, 17 - 43.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 40 - 42.

to all. He got Jaganntha's *prasad* in huge quantity and served them. After they had eaten he honoured them by offering garlands.¹⁸ On the Ratha-yatha day he saw, after the usual dance and *kirtan* of the seven parties, the dance of Mahaprabhu. He was surprised to see the beauty and *bhav* of Mahaprabhu at that time. His faith in Mahaprabhu as the incarnation of Krishna was further strengthened.¹⁹

After Rath-yatra one day Vallabhacharya went to Mahaprabhu and said, "I have written a commentary on *Bhagavat*. I shall be happy, if you kindly listen." Mahaprabhu showed indifference by saying, "I am not qualified to listen *Bhagavat*, because I cannot understand it. I also do not have time to listen, because I do Harinam-japa day and night, still I find it difficult to complete the *sankhya* (number) of japa."

Then Vallabhacharya said, "Would you kindly let me hear your commentary on the meaning of the name 'Krishna'?"

Mahaprabhu said, "Krishna-nam may have many meanings, which I do not know. I only know that it means 'Shyamasundar, the son of Yashoda'."²⁰ Vallabhacharya felt humiliated.

One day Vallabhacharya said to Advaitacharya in the presence of Mahaprabhu, "*Jiva is prakriti* and

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 45 - 56.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 61 - 64.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 69 - 70.

regards Krishna as her *pati* (husband). The *pativrata*²¹ never utters the name of her husband. How is it then that you utter the name of Krishna? Does it not violate your *dharma*?" Advaitacharya said, pointing to Mahaprabhu, "Here is *dharma* personified. You can address this question to him." Mahaprabhu said, "You do not know what is *dharma*. It is the *dharma* of the *pativrata* to obey the *pati*. If the *pati* asks her always to chant his name, how can she disobey?" Vallabhacharya had nothing else to say.²²

Another day Vallabhacharya said to Mahaprabhu, "I do not approve of Sridhar Svami's commentary on *Bhagavat*. I have criticized it, because it lacks uniformity."²³

Mahaprabhu said, "One, who does not recognize Svami is a Veshya (prostitute)." Punning on the word 'Svami', which also means 'husband', Mahaprabhu wanted to convey that it was an offence to disregard Sridhar Svami, just as it was an offence for a lady to disregard her husband.²⁴

Vallabhacharya felt mortified. He went back home and began to think, "Formerly Mahaprabhu showed great regard for me. I wonder why his mind is now turned against me. Every time I say something to him,

²¹ Lady exclusively devoted to her husband.

²² C. C., 3, 7, 90 - 91.

²³ *Ibid*, 97 - 98.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 99.

he snubs me. Perhaps he wants to do good to me by shattering my pride and I foolishly feel aggrieved like Indra, after his pride was shattered by Krishna.”²⁵

The next morning he went to Mahaprabhu. He fell at his feet and said, “I am a fool. I had the pride of knowledge and wanted to display my knowledge to you. You are Ishvar. You showed mercy on me. You shattered my pride. Now kindly forgive my offence and place Your lotus feet on my head.”²⁶

Mahaprabhu said, “Sridhar Svami is *jagadguru*. We learn *Srimad Bhagavat* from him. You give up your pride and follow him in your commentary. Do not commit any more offence. Perform Krishna-sankirtan. You will soon attain the shelter of the lotus feet of Krishna.”²⁷

Vallabhacharya was the worshipper of Bala-gopal (child Krishna). The company of Gadadhar Pandit changed his mind. He developed love for Kishor-Gopal (youthful Krishna) and wanted to worship Him. He requested Gadadhar to give him Mantra for the worship of Kishor-Gopal. Gadadhar first refused, but later gave him Mantra with the consent of Mahaprabhu.²⁸

²⁵ *Ibid*, 107 - 108.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 110 - 114.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 117 - 121.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 132 - 134; 155.

RAMACHANDRA PURI AND MAHAPRABHU

Ramachandra Puri was a disciple of Madhavendra Puri. He was near him at the time of his passing away. Madhavendra was at that time weeping on account of separation from Krishna. Ramachandra had the audacity to advise the guru. He said, "You remember your self as Brahman and get lost in Brahmanand. Why weep?"²⁹

Madhavendra said angrily, "Sinner! Get away from here. Do not show me your face. If I die seeing your face, I shall be doomed. Brahmananda! I am dying on account of separation from Krishna and the fellow talks of Brahman!"³⁰

On account of the offence committed by Ramachandra at the feet of the Guru, he remained a *jnani*, devoid of any relationship with Krishna and a slanderer all his life.

He and Paramanand Puri went to Nilachal. When they went to Mahaprabhu, he made obeisance to them and respectfully gave them *asan* to sit. The three talked of Krishna for some time. Then Jagadanand invited them for *Bhiksa*. Jagadanand got Jagannath's *prasad* in good quantity and served them. When they had eaten Ramachandra asked him to eat the remnant. Jagadanand sat down to eat and he began to serve. He went on serving with insistence to eat and made him eat beyond

²⁹ C. C., 3, 8, 19 - 20.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 21 - 24.

his capacity. When he had finished eating, he began to pass slanderous remarks. He said, "I had heard that the followers of Chaitanya ate a lot. I have now seen with my own eyes what I had heard. By making the Sannyasis eat so much he destroys their *dharma*."³¹

It was the habit of Ramachandra to find faults of people and criticize them. Sometimes he imagined a fault, if there was none. He went to Mahaprabhu every day. Mahaprabhu respected him like his Guru, because he was a disciple of Madhavendra Puri. But he, instead of looking at his good qualities, always tried to find some fault. Not being able to find any fault, one day he imagined a fault on a flimsy ground. He saw some ants moving about in front of his *kuti* and began to say, "The presence of ants proves that there were sweets here last night. Alas! To be a Sannyasi and to have so much greed!" He said and went away.³²

Mahaprabhu immediately called Govind and asked him to cut down the quantity of his meals to half and not to accept even a particle more from anyone in *bhiksa*. Govind had to obey Mahaprabhu and Mahaprabhu started eating half the usual quantity and remain half hungry.³³

After a few days Ramachandra Puri again came and said to Mahaprabhu, "You look emaciated. I hear

³¹ *Ibid*, 11 - 15.

³² *Ibid*, 46 - 47.

³³ *Ibid*, 50 - 57.

that you have cut down your meals and remain hungry. This is austerity for its own sake (*Shushka Vairagya*). This is not the Sannyasi's *dharma*. Instead of remaining hungry, he should eat as much as necessary, otherwise his *jnana-yoga* will not be successful.”³⁴

Mahaprabhu said, “I am your ignorant child. You are my Guru. It is my good fortune that you advise me like a Guru.”

When Paramanand Puri heard that Mahaprabhu had cut down his meals and remained hungry, he went to him with the other devotees and said, “Ramachandra is by nature a slanderer. You should not take him seriously. You must give up your austerity and accept the invitation of the devotees as before.”

Mahaprabhu said, “Why are you all angry with Ramachandra Puri? He has given the right advice. A Sannyasi should not eat more than what is necessary to keep together body and soul.” On the insistence of the devotees, however, he increased the quantity of his meals a little.

After a few more days Ramachandra Puri went out on pilgrimage. The devotees then breathed a sigh of relief. Gadadhar Pandit, Sarvabhaum, Bhagavanacharya and others began to invite Mahaprabhu for *bhiksa*. Always bound by their love, as he was, he had to accept their invitation.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 62 - 63.

MERCY ON GOPINATH PATTANAYAK

Gopinath Pattanayak was the son of Bhavanand Raya and the brother of Ramanand Raya. He was also like Ramanand the governor of a part of Orissa. He had to collect the revenue from there and pay to Maharaja Prataparudra every year. One year he paid two lac less than the amount due. On the Maharaja's demanding the remaining two lac, he said, "I shall pay slowly by instalments. I also have ten or twelve horses. You can take them after determining their value." Maharaja agreed. He asked his son Purushottam Jana to determine the value of the horses.

Purushottam Jana bore a grudge against Gopinath. He valued the horses much lower than their actual worth. Gopinath enjoyed the favour of the Maharaja. He said angrily, "My horses do not raise their necks and turn them right and left like you."

Purushottam had this habit of raising his neck and turning it round from time to time. He became angry. He went and said to the Maharaja, "Gopinath is recalcitrant. He has money but does not want to pay. If he is threatened with death and is made to stand on the *chang*,³⁵ he will pay." The Maharaja said, "You can do that. The money must be realized from him."³⁶

³⁵ A board on which the culprit was made to stand before being gullotined.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 26 - 28.

When Gopiath was made to stand on the chang, his people went to Mahaprabhu and requested him to intervene. Mahaprabhu said, "If Gopinath does not pay to the Raja his due, what can I do? The Raja is not at fault."

Mahaprabhu was saying this, when another man came and said, "Vaninath and his family have also been arrested and carried away." Mahaprabhu again said, "I am a Sannyasi. What can I do? The Raja must realize his dues."³⁷

Vaninath was the brother of Gopinath. He was also like Ramanand the governor of a part of Orrisa and he had also like Ramanand relinquished the governorship for the service of Mahaprabhu. The prince arrested him to put extra pressure upon Gopinath.

When Svarup and the other devotees heard about the miserable condition of Gopinath and Vaninath and Mahaprabhu's reluctance to do anything to save them, they went to him and said, "Gopinath and Vaninath are totally surrendered to you like Ramanand and their father Bhavanand. It does not behove you to remain indifferent, when they are being dragged to death."

Mahaprabhu said, "You want me to go to the Raja and beg for two lac. I am a Sannyasi, not worth even a shell. Why should the Raja give me two lac?"³⁸

³⁷ *Ibid*, 33 - 34.

³⁸ C. C., 3, 9, 35 - 36.

Just then came a man and said, "They are now going to hang Gopinath!"³⁹

When the companions of Mahaprabhu heard this, they again tried prayerfully to persuade Mahaprabhu to do something for Gopinath. But he said, "I am a beggar. What can I do? If you want to save him, you pray to Jagannath. He is all powerful. He can do what no one else can."⁴⁰

Though Mahaprabhu had outwardly adopted a totally indifferent attitude, internally he had sympathy for Gopinath and Vaninath and desired their release. His desire was apparent when he asked the devotees to pray to Jagannath. His desire could not remain unfulfilled. It stirred some powerful forces, which automatically began to work for the release of Gopinath.

Harichandan Patra, the chief-minister of Prataparudra said to him, "Gopinath is your servant. Is it proper to kill the servant? He has to pay your money. By killing him you will lose him as well as your money. Why not assess the proper value of his horses and let him pay the rest by instalments?"

Prataparudra said, "I did not know that Purushottam was going to kill Gopinath. He was only to be threatened with death, so that he might pay the dues. You go and do what you think proper so that he does not die and the dues are realized."

³⁹ *Ibid*, 40.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 41 - 43.

Harichandan had Gopinath released after determining the proper value of the horses and fixing a time limit for payment of the rest of the dues.⁴¹

Soon after Mahaprabhu said to Kashi Misra, "I will not live here. I will go to Alalanath. Here people disturb my peace by speaking to me about their sorrows and the worldly affairs. Gopinath was sent to *chang* for not paying the Raja's legitimate dues and the people came to me several times to persuade me to save him from punishment."⁴²

Kashi Misra somehow pacified him. Next morning Prataparudra came to him. Since he was the Raj-guru Prataparudra came to him every morning, when he lived in Puri, made obeisance to him and massaged his feet. He said to him while he was massaging his feet, "Listen! Mahaprabhu wants to go and live in Alalanath." The Raja was stunned. He asked why he wanted to leave Nilachal. Kashi Misra then told him everything. Raja was extremely sorry to hear.

He said, "I can forgo two lac, if Mahaprabhu wants. Two lac is nothing. I can relinquish my kingdom, my life and everything for the happiness of Mahaprabhu. Even crores of Chintamani can be sacrificed for his *darshan* for a moment."⁴³

Kashi Misra said, "Mahaprabhu does not want that

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 49 - 56.

⁴² *Ibid*, 59 - 65.

⁴³ *Ibid*,

you forgo the money. He was only unhappy to hear all about this affair."

The Raja said, "I did not want to cause unhappiness to him. I did not know that Gopinath was going to be hanged. I only knew that Purushottam Jana wanted to threaten him with death, because he had mocked at him. You go and try to retain Mahaprabhu. I am going to excuse Gopinath and relinquish the dues."

Misra said, "Mahaprabhu does not want that you should forgo the dues. On the other hand he may feel unhappy to know that you have forgone the dues on account of him."

Raja said, "You do not tell him that I have forgone two lac on account of him, but on account of my natural love for Bhavanand and his entire family."⁴⁴

On going back the Raja called both Gopinath and Purushottam Jana. He said to Gopinath, "I relinquish two lac. I also reappoint you as governor and double your salary. Do not again default on payment of the dues of the state."⁴⁵

When Kashi Misra told Mahaprabhu about this, he said, "Misra! What have you done? You have put me under obligation to the Raja!"

Kashi Misra told him how the Raja had assured

⁴⁴ *ibid*, 92 - 101.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 103 - 105.

him that he was doing it on account of his natural love for the family of Bhavanand.⁴⁶

Mahaprabhu was happy to hear this. Then Bhavanand came with his five sons. In all humility and gratefulness they fell at his feet. Gopinath said, "I remembered you, when I stood on the *chang* to be hanged. By your grace I am not only excused and released, my governorship is restored and salary doubled. But this is only the secondary result of your mercy. I have yet to get the main result of your mercy which Ramanand and Vaninath have obtained. You have delivered them from the bondage of this world and blessed them with the service of your lotus feet. Kindly be equally merciful to me."⁴⁷

Mahaprabhu said, "Bhavanand has a big family. If all the five of you become Sannyasi, who will look after the family? You do not bother. Whether you are a Sannyasi or a house-holder, you are all my servants for ever and ever."

GOVIND'S SERVICE

Once when the devotees from Gaud had come at the time of Rath-yatra the Sankirtan of seven parties was, as usual, performed at the temple of Jagannath. Mahaprabhu kept going from one party to another. At the end he collected all the parties. They all performed

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 116 - 124.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 130 - 137.

Sankirtan together and Mahaprabhu danced in the middle. After Sankirtan he bathed in the sea with the devotees and went back to his *kuti*. He took *prasad* and lay down to rest. Govind always massaged his feet after he had taken *prasad*. He took *prasad* himself only after he had finished massaging. So he went to massage.

Mahaprabhu's room was small and it had only one door. Govind was surprised to see that that day Mahaprabhu was not sleeping in the middle of the room as usual, but so close to the door and in such a way that it was not possible for him to go in for massaging without crossing his body. He was in a fix. He did not know what to do. He could not cross the body. He could not also remain without performing the usual service of massaging, especially because Mahaprabhu needed it more than on other days, since that day he had performed dance and *kirtan* from morning till the afternoon.

He requested Mahaprabhu to move a little to the other side so that he might go in. Mahaprabhu said, "I am too tired. I do not have the strength to move." Govind repeated the request several times. Everytime the reply was the same. Govind said, "Prabhu! How will I massage?" Mahaprabhu said, "You massage or not, do as you like."⁴⁸ Govind thought for a while. He then took off his *bahirvas*, spread it over the body of

⁴⁸ C. C., 3, 10, 82 - 85.

Mahaprabhu and went over to the other side crossing the body. He spread his *bahirvas* over it so that the dust of his feet might not fall upon it. Ordinarily people do not cross even the shadow of the guru or the person whom they adore. But Govind crossed the very Person, Whom he worshipped as Bhagavan!

Govind massaged the feet and the back of Mahaprabhu. His gentle massage relieved the pain of his body and he fell asleep. After about an hour his sleep broke. He saw that Govind was still sitting in the room. He said angrily, "You are still here. Why did you not go to take your *prasad* after I had slept?"

Govind said, "I could not, because you were sleeping at the door." Mahaprabhu said, "You could go as you came."⁴⁹

Govind did not say anything to him. But he said to himself, "Service is my duty. For the sake of service I do not care for any offence, even if I have to go to hell: But I cannot commit an offence for my own comfort."⁵⁰

Krishnadas Kaviraja says that perhaps Mahaprabhu deliberately slept at the door that day and refused to move, because he wanted to present to the people the ideal of service and disclose to them, through the conduct of Govind, the secret of Bhakti.⁵¹

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 86 - 91.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 92 - 93.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 97 - 98.

MAHAPRABHU'S MERCY ON KAVIKARNAPUR

Once when Shivanand went to Nilachal with his wife, she was pregnant. Mahaprabhu said to him, "Shivanand! This time, if you have a son, name him after Paramanand Puri. Call him 'Paramanand Puri Das' or 'Puri Das.' When Shivanand went to Gaud his younger son was born. He named him 'Puridas'. Next year when he went to Nilachal he lay him down at the feet of Mahaprabhu and said, "Prabhu! Bless Puri Das." Mahaprabhu put his great toe into his mouth.⁵² He began to suck it freely. Mahaprabhu was pleased to see this. When Puri Das was seven years old, Shivanand took him to Mahaprabhu again. Mahaprabhu said, "Puri Das! Say 'Krishna'. Puri Das remained silent. Mahaprabhu said woefully, "I have made even the animals say 'Krishna', but I couldn't make this boy say 'Krishna'.⁵³ Svarup Gosvami was also at that time with him. He said, "Prabhu! The boy is intelligent. He has taken the name of 'Krishna' uttered by you as *Ishta-mantra*. The *Ishta-mantra* is repeated mentally."⁵⁴ Mahaprabhu was happy to hear this. He said, "Puri Das, if you cannot say 'Krishna', let me hear something else from your mouth." Then Puri Das stood up and recited the following Sloka, composed by him:

⁵² *Ibid.* 49.

⁵³ C. C., 3, 15, 63-65.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 65-67.

*"sravash kuvalayamaksno ranjana-yuraso
mahendramanidama/
vrindavana ramaninam mamdanakhilam
harirjayate//*

—Glorified be Sri Hari, Who is the blue lotus of the ears of the gopis, the pigment of their eyes, the sapphire of their breast and all their other ornaments.”⁵⁵

Everyone was surprised to hear this Sloka from the mouth of a boy, seven years old. They thought that it was the result of the *shakti*, Mahaprabhu had instilled into his heart by making him suck his toe.

After hearing the Sloka Mahaprabhu said, “Dear child! You have in your Sloka described the ornament of the ear (*karna*) of the gopis of Vraj, therefore your name from today is ‘Kavikarnapur.’ Kavikarnapur’s *Anand-vrindavana-champu*, *Alamkarakaustubha*, *Sri Chaitanya-chandrodaya* (*drama*), *SriKrishna Chaitanya-charit* (*mahakavya*), *Gauragannoddesha-dipika* and other works, which are available even today, are a proof that Mahaprabhu injected his *Shakti* into him, because without his *Shakti* such works could not be written.

MERCY ON KALIDAS

Kalidas belonged to the Khuda caste to which Raghunath Das belonged. He chanted Harinam all the

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 68-69.

time. He had infinite faith in the dust of the feet of the Vaishnavas and the remains of the food eaten by them.⁵⁶ It is said that he had taken the remains of all the Vishnavas of Gaud of his time.⁵⁷ Whenever he heard of a Vaishnav, he went to him, irrespective of the caste to which he belonged, with some edible thing, which he presented to him. After the Vaishnav had offered it to the deity and eaten himself, he requested him for his remains. If the Vaishnav refused to give, he tried by some means or other to obtain it without his knowing it.

Once he went to the house of Jhadu Thakur, a great Vaishnav of very low caste with some mangoes, which he presented to him. Jhadu Thakur said with great concern, "Thakur! I belong to a very low caste. How can I be of any service to you. If you permit I may arrange for your dinner at the house of some Brahmin." Kalidas said, "No, no, that is not necessary at all. If you permit I may make one request."

"Yes, yes, let me know."

"Kindly give me the dust of your feet, so that I may apply it to my forehead and be blest."

"What do you say Thakur? Is that possible? I belong to a very low caste. If I give you the dust of my feet, will I not go to hell?"

⁵⁶ C. C., 3, 16, 8.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, 9

"Listen Jhadu Thakur! the scriptures say that even the *chandal*,⁵⁸ who is a Bhakta, is far superior to a Brahmin, who has read the four Vedas, but is not a Bhakta. He is fit to be a guru and Bhagavan lovingly eats the food offered by him. He does not even look at the food offered by a *Vedapathi*⁵⁹ Brahmin, who is not a Bhakta."

"You are right. Whatever the caste of the Krishna-bhakta, he is superior to everyone else. But I am not a Bhakta, not even the shadow of a Bhakta. If you call me a Bhakta, Bhakti would be disgraced."

When all the entreaties of Kalidas failed, he took leave of Jhadu Thakur. Jhadu Thakur went with him for some distance to see him off and returned. As soon as Jhadu Thakur turned his back, he also turned and took the dust of his feet from the footprints left by him. He then hid himself in a nearby forest.

Jhadu Thakur ate the mangoes after offering them to the deity and threw the stones and skin outside. Then Kalidas came out of the forest, picked up the stones and the skin and sucked from them whatever juice was left in them. The more he sucked, the more he was overwhelmed with *prem*.⁶⁰

Once Kalidas went to Nilachal for the *darshan* of Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu was happy to see him. He

⁵⁸ A man of the lowest caste.

⁵⁹ One, who reads the Vedas.

⁶⁰ *ibid*, 34.

arranged for his lodging. Every day Kalidas went with Mahaprabhu to the temple of Jagannath for *darshan*. There was a pit to the North of Sinhadvar and by the side of the gate of the temple. Mahaprabhu washed his feet in that pit before entering the temple. As ordered by him no one could take his *charanamrita* from the pit. One day, when Mahaprabhu was washing his feet over the pit, Kalidas cupped his hands and extended them to take the *charanamrita* as it fell into the pit. He took the *charanamrita* three times. Mahaprabhu kept looking. When he extended his hands for the fourth time, Mahaprabhu said, "No more Kalidas. Your desire is fulfilled."⁶¹

After the *darshan* of Jagannath, Mahaprabhu returned to Gambhira. Govind gave him Jagannath's *prasad* to eat. Mahaprabhu ate. In the meantime Kalidas remained sitting outside with the intention of taking Mahaprabhu's *maha-prasad*.⁶² Omniscient Mahaprabhu came to know. He said to Govind, "Govind! Kalidas is sitting outside. Give him my remains." Govind went out and said to Kalidas, "Kaldas! Take Mahaprabhu's remains. He has sent them to you." Kalidas was overwhelmed. "Oh! Mahaprabhu is so merciful to me!" Tears streamed out of his eyes.

Mahaprabhu's *charanamrita* and his *mahaprasad*, which even Brahma covets but cannot get, Kalidas got

⁶¹ *ibid*, 44.

⁶² Thakur's *prasad*, eaten by a Vaishnav.

so easily on account of his Bhakti towards the dust of the feet of the Vaishnavas, their *charanamrit* and the remains of the food eaten by them.

MAHAPRABHU'S LOVE FOR THE OFFERINGS MADE BY THE DEVOTEES

Every year, when the devotees went to Nilachal, they took with them for Mahaprabhu several kinds of specially prepared food that lasted long. Raghav Pandit and his wife Damayanti prepared a great variety of things, including even some bitter preparations to prevent indigestion, and sent them in enough quantity to last for a year. These had to be carried in big *jhalis* (baskets) by three porters.⁶³ Each devotee presented to Mahaprabhu his offerings in a *jhali*, which Mahaprabhu passed on to Govind for storage. Each devotee wanted that Mahaprabhu should eat the offerings made by him. He asked Govind everyday whether he had presented his offering to Mahaprabhu for eating and whether he had eaten. Govind could not present before Mahaprabhu the offerings of all the devotees in a day or two, nor could Mahaprabhu eat all the offerings in a day or two. Govind felt very much embarrassed.

Once Govind said to Mahaprabhu, "Prabhu! I am in great difficulty. The devotees come to me everyday and ask whether you have eaten the things brought by them. I can't give you the offerings brought by so

⁶³ C. C., 3, 10, 12 - 36.

many devotees to be eaten by you in a day or two. If I tell them every day that you have not eaten, they feel disappointed.”⁶⁴

Mahaprabhu said, “Why do you worry? Bring everything here. Let me know who has given what.”⁶⁵

Mahaprabhu sat down to eat. Govind began to serve him the offerings of different devotees, mentioning the name of each. Mahaprabhu ate all. He ate what a hundred persons together could not eat.⁶⁶

He then asked, “Is there anything more to eat?” Govind said, “Only Raghav’s *jhali* remains.” Mahaprabhu said, “Let it remain. I will see it afterwards.” Another day, when Mahaprabhu sat down to eat, he asked Govind to bring Raghav’s *jhali*. He ate a little from each of the different items in the *jhali* and eulogized the taste and odour of each. Then he asked Govind to keep them for the rest of the year and give him a little each day.⁶⁷

THE WOMAN SINGING GITA-GOVIND

Once Mahaprabhu was going to Yameshvar Tota. Govind was with him. He heard some one singing Gita-govind in sonorous tone. He felt very much attracted and ran headlong towards the singer

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 110 - 112.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 113.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 124.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 125 - 128.

unmindful of the stones and the thorny bushes on the way. The thorns pricked him and made him bleed, but he remained unaware. Govind rushed behind him. When he was only a short distance from the person singing, Govind cried aloud, "Prabhu! The singer is a woman." This aroused his outward consciousness. He turned back. He said to Govind, "Govind! You have saved my life today. I shall always remain indebted to you for this." Govind said, "It is Jagannath, Who saved you, not I." Mahaprabhu said, "Govind! You always remain with me and protect me."

When Svarup and the other devotees came to know about this, they were filled with anxiety, because they knew that if Mahaprabhu ever touched a woman, he might commit suicide.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ C. C., 3, 13, 77 - 87.

CHAPTER XXXI

DIVINE MADNESS

After Sannyas Mahaprabhu lived for twenty-four years. During the first six years he went on pilgrimages to the South and the North. For eighteen years after that he did not go anywhere from Nilachal. During the first six years of this period he met the people, who came to Nilachal to see him and talked with them. Rupa, Sanatan, Pradyumn Misra and others came during this period. His last twelve years were the years of *divyonmad* (divine madness). During this period he always swam in the bottomless ocean of Krishna-*prem*. He always had the *bhav* of Radha and passed through the same states of *divyonmad* through which Radha passed in separation from Krishna.¹

Divyonmad is not ordinary madness, but divine frenzy of a special kind, which is possible only in Radha.

Rupa Gosvami mentions in *Ujjvelanilamani* that *udghurna* and *chitraljalpa* are the two states of *divyonmad*.² *Udghurna* means the surprisingly helpless

¹ C. C., 3, 14, 11 - 13.

² *Ujjvalanilamani, Sthayi*, 137.

acts and movements caused by the intensity of *prem*.³ For example Radha forgets that Krishna is gone to Mathura. She imagines Him to be in Vrindavan and to have promised to come to her at some particular time of night. In that expectation she adorns herself and her surroundings. When He does not turn up, she sighs deeply and frets and fumes.⁴ *Chitralalpa* consists in Radha's uttering deeply anxious and resentful words on her meeting a friend of Krishna.

Krishnadas says that Mahaprabhu's *divyonmad bhav* is very deep and difficult to understand. But he mentions some of his acts and movements in this *bhav* as described in the Kadachas of Svarup and Raghunath.⁵

THE DREAM AND THE SAKHI-BHAV

One day Mahaprabhu saw Ras-lila in a dream. He saw the gopis dancing in a circle and Radha-Krishna dancing in the middle. On seeing the dream he developed the *bhav* that he had found Radha-Krishna in Vrindavan.⁶ Lost in this *bhav* he slept till late in the morning that day. When Govind woke him up, he was sorry to find that it was a dream. But the *bhav* of the dream persisted. In the dream he was witnessing

³ *ibid*

⁴ *Ujjvalanilamani, Nayika*, 42, 45.

⁵ C. C., 3, 14, 4 - 6.

⁶ C. C., 3, 14, 15 - 18.

Rasa as a Sakhi or Manjari.⁷ He still thought that he was a Manjari and not Sri Krishna Chaitanya. His basic *bhav* during this period was that of Radha, but Sakhi-*bhav* was superimposed on Radha-*bhav* on account of *udghurna*. He had no outward consciousness. His routine activities went on automatically as a matter of habit.⁸

Possessed with the same *bhav* he went to the temple of Jagannath for *darshan*. His Vrindavan *bhav* prevented him from seeing Balaram and Subhadra. He saw Jagannath as Sri Krishna with the flute in His hand and the peacock feather on His crown.⁹

THE LADY ON SHOULDER

While having the *darshan* of Jagannath, Mahaprabhu was, as usual, standing by the side of the pillar having on it the image of Garuda (*Garuda-stambha*¹⁰) with his left hand on the pillar. The temple was crowded. An Oriya lady, who was not able to have *darshan* on account of the crowd, climbed the pillar and began to look at Jagannath with one foot placed on the shoulder of Mahaprabhu. The intensity of her desire for *darshan* had made her lose outward consciousness. She was

⁷ Manjari is a Sakhi, who is exclusively devoted to Radha and loves Krishna because He is loved by Radha.

⁸ C. C., 3, 14, 19 - 20.

⁹ *Ibid*, 29 - 30.

¹⁰ A bird used by Vishnu as His conveyance.

totally unaware of the fact that she had paced her foot on the shoulder of a man. Mahaprabhu also did not have outward consciousness. He was also not aware of the lady's foot on his shoulder. Govind asked the lady in a commanding tone to come down. Govind's words struck Mahaprabhu's ears. His outward consciousness was partly revived. He said in half-conscious state, "Do not disturb her. Let her see Jagannath to her heart's content."¹¹

But Govind's words fully revived the consciousness of the lady. She realized that she had placed her foot on the shoulder of a man. She came down at once. On seeing Mahaprabhu she made obeisance to him.¹²

Seeing the lady's *bhav*, Mahaprabhu began to say, "Oh! Blessed is the lady. She was so absorbed in the *darshan* of Jagannath that she did not know she had her foot on my shoulder. Alas! The Lord did not give me the passionate yearning for *darshan* she has. I bow down to her so that she may give me that yearning as her *prasad*."¹³

Mahaprabhu's attitude towards this woman was totally opposed to his attitude towards the afore-mentioned woman, singing Gita-govind. In the case of that woman he had expressed deep gratitude towards

¹¹ *Ibid*, 22.

¹² *Ibid*, 25.

¹³ *Ibid*, 26 - 28.

Govind for preventing him from touching her, while in this case he prevented Govind from removing the woman from his shoulder. Why? The reason is obvious. In the case of the woman singing *Gita-govind*, Mahaprabhu was his own self, the Sannyasi Sri Krishna Chaitanya, who could not touch a woman, while in this case he was not himself, but a Sakhi of Vrindavan, looking at Sri Krishna in Vrindavan. The Sakhi is a woman and there is no harm if a woman touches a woman.

It will be apparent from the sequel that though Mahaprabhu's outward consciousness was half revived on seeing the Oriya lady, his Sakhi *bhav* persisted. The disturbance caused by the lady only made him lose his Vrindavan-*bhav*. Instead of seeing the Krishna of Vrindavan in Jagannath he now saw in Him the Krishna of Kurushetra with Subhadra and Balaram. He began to wail, "Oh! Where have I come? I was in sweet Vrindavan and now in the battle-field of Kuruksetra!"¹⁴ Even when he went back to his *kuti*, he sat weeping in the *bhav* of Sakhi, writing something with his nails on the floor and wailing, "I found Krishna and lost Him. Who took away my Krishna? Who brought me here from Vrindavan?"¹⁵

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 31 - 32.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 34 - 35.

MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE FROM GAMBHIRA

During this period Mahaprabhu passed the day in Krishna-katha (talks about Krishna) and *kirtan*. At night the pain he suffered in separation from Krishna increased ten-fold. Repeatedly he wailed and fell unconscious. On regaining consciousness he either asked Ramanand to recite some Shlok or Svarup to sing some song about Krishna. Svarup was a good singer. He tried to relieve his suffering by singing a song of Jayadeva, Vidyapati or Chandidas. This continued till late at night. At the end Svarup made Mahaprabhu lie down for rest in his room. He put off the lamp and latched the door from outside. Then he lay to sleep at the door with Govind. Sometimes Mahaprabhu slept, sometimes started chanting aloud *harinam*. Svarup had repeatedly to go in to persuade him to sleep.

Once when Ramanand had gone home and Svarup and Govind had slept outside after making Mahaprabhu lie down to sleep in his room, they did not hear him chanting *harinam* for a long time. This caused some anxiety. They opened the door of Mahaprabhu's *kuti* and were stupefied to see that he was not there. How and where had he gone! They searched every corner of the house of Kashi Misra. He was not found anywhere. Obviously he had gone out of Kashi Misra's house. In order to go out of the house three doors had to be crossed. Each of these

doors was locked.¹⁶ How then could he go out? Raghunath Das Gosvami has written in his *Chaitanya-stava-kalpa-vraksa* that instead of opening the three doors Mahaprabhu went to the roof of the house and jumped over the three walls surrounding it. Some, however, think that, when Mahaprabhu wanted to go out, His *aishvaryya* Shakti opened the doors and closed them when he had gone out. Howsoever it may have been, Svarup and Govind went out of the house with lanterns and began to search him. They found him lying unconscious at a place in the North of the Sinhadvar¹⁷ of Jagannath's temple.¹⁸ Though they felt relieved to find him, they became anxious to see the condition in which he was lying. The joints of his arms and legs had opened. The jointed parts had separated and the arms and legs had become much longer. At the place of joints had remained only the skin. His eyes had turned upwards, his nose was without breath and the froth of saliva came out of his mouth.¹⁹ Everyone was aghast and aggrieved to see him lying in that condition. Svarup and others shouted aloud the name of Krishna into his ears. After a long time outward consciousness returned to him and he stood up shouting aloud 'Haribol!' The separated parts

¹⁶ C. C., 3, 14, 56.

¹⁷ The gate on the Eastern side of the temple is called 'Sinhadvar' or the 'Lion-gate'.

¹⁸ C. C., 3, 14, 58.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 60 - 64.

of the joints again joined and the natural condition of the body was resumed.²⁰

Mahaprabhu was surprised to find himself at the Sinhadvar. He said to Svarup, "Where am I? What are you doing here?" Svarup said, "Prabhu! Let us go home. I will tell you everything there." When Svarup told him everything he was surprised. He said, "I do not know anything. I only saw Krishna appear and disappear like lightening again and again."²¹

Krishnadas Kaviraj says that the wonderful Sattvik-*bhavs* that appeared on Mahaprabhu's body at this time are neither mentioned in the Shastras, nor have been heard before. But he writes about them as he has heard from Raghunath Das Gosvami, who lived in close proximity of Mahaprabhu throughout this period and was an eye-witness of all that he writes.²²

DARSHAN OF GOVARDHAN AND KRISHNA-LILA ON THE CHATAK HILL

Once Mahaprabhu was going to bathe in the sea with Govind. From a distance he saw the Chatak hill. In the state of divine frenzy he thought he was in Vrindavan and the hill he saw was the Govardhan hill of Vrindavan. He ran towards it with lightening speed

²⁰ *Ibid*, 65 - 67.

²¹ *Ibid*, 69 - 73.

²² *Ibid*, 75 - 78.

reciting a Shlok in its praise.²³ Govind ran after him, but could not keep pace with him. Svarup, Jagadanand, Gadadhar, Damodar, Puri and Bharati all ran after him. No one could catch him.²⁴ But he suddenly fell into stupor (*stambha*), one of the Sattvik-*bhavs*, which makes one numb and motionless, and he could not move.²⁵ Every pore of his body assumed the shape of a boil and hair stood on end so that it looked like a kadamba flower. Blood oozed out of each pore. Throat was choked. Inarticulate sound came out of it in low tone. Tears streamed out of both eyes like Ganga and Yamuna in spate. The body became white like a conchshell. It trembled like the waves of the sea and trembling fell on the ground.²⁶

Govind began to sprinkle water over his body and fan it with his *bahirvas*. Soon came Svarup. He began to weep to see the condition of Mahaprabhu and was surprised to see the wonderful Sattvik-*bhavs* on his body. He washed his body with cold water and started singing *Sankirtan* in loud tone near his ears. After a long time Mahaprabhu suddenly stood up shouting 'Haribol!'²⁷ The Vaishnavs also happily shouted 'Haribol!'

Mahaprabhu began to look this side and that, wanting to see something, he had suddenly stopped

²³ *Ibid*, 79 - 80.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 82 - 84.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 85.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 85 - 89.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 91 - 95.

seeing. On seeing the Vaishnavs his outward consciousness was half revived. He said to Svarup, "Who brought me here from Goverdhan? I went to Govardhan to see whether Krishna was pasturing cows there. I saw the cows grazing round Govardhan. Krishna went up the hill and blew His flute. Radha heard the flute. She came running. Oh my dear Sakhi! How I wish I could describe her beauty to you. Krishna took her with Him and entered a cave. One of the Sakhis of Radha asked me to pick flowers to decorate the couple. At that time you started shouting and brought me here. Sakhi! Why did you bring me here to grieve? You did not let me see Krishna-lila."²⁸ He said this and began to weep. The Vaishnavs also began to weep.

At this time came Puri and Bharati. Mahaprabhu's consciousness was fully revived to see them. He made obeisance to them and they embraced him. He said, "Why did you take the trouble of coming so far?" They said smilingly, "We only came to see your dance."

Mahaprabhu bathed in the sea with the devotees, then went to Gambhira and took *mahaprasad* with them.

KRISHNA'S ATTRACTION

Mahaprabhu always swam in the sea of Krishna-prem. There were very few moments, when he had outward

²⁸ *Ibid*, 98 - 105.

consciousness. Outwardly he was either unconscious or half-conscious. His bodily activities like bathing, eating or going to the temple for *darshan* went on more or less automatically on account of habit, like the wheel of the pot-maker.²⁹

In half-conscious condition one day he went to the temple of Jagannath for *darshan*. He saw Jagannath as Nandnandan Sri Krishna (Krishna, the son of Nand). When the devotees brought him home, the son of Nand still haunted his mind. He threw his arms round the necks of Svarup and Ramanand and began to wail as Radha wailed before Lalita and Vishakha. He said, "Sakhi! I am in deep distress. My mind is not my own. It is possessed completely and pulled mercilessly by each of the five qualities of Krishna. My five senses are so much attracted by His qualities that they run headlong towards them, the eyes towards His beauty, the nose towards the sweet fragrance of His body, the ears towards the sweetness of His voice, the body towards the cooling and comforting touch of His body and the tongue towards the extremely intoxicating nectar of His lips. Each runs towards the object of its attraction like a robber to rob some one of his wealth, without thinking of the consequences. My mind is like a horse, which five horse-men ride, each trying to pull it in a different direction at one and the same time."³⁰

²⁹ C. C., 3, 15, 2 - 5.

³⁰ C. C., 3, 15, 13 - 15.

"But Sakhi! The senses are not at fault. The objects of their attraction are such that it is impossible for them to restrain themselves.³¹ Krishna's beauty is an ocean of which even a drop can drown the world. There is no woman in the three worlds, whose mind, even if it be lofty and strong like a mountain, it cannot drown.³² Krishna's speech is full of different kinds of Rasa. Its sweetness is killing to every woman, who hears it.³³ His body is cool like sandal. It naturally attracts the breasts of women on account of its cooling effect.³⁴ The fragrance of His body enters the nose and forcefully attracts the woman, whose nose it enters.³⁵ The nectar of His smiling lips is the most important wealth of the gopis of Vraj and the most powerful source of attraction for them."³⁶

After wailing like this Mahaprabhu said to Svarup and Ramanand, "Now tell me what I should do, where I should go to find my Krishna. I cannot live without Him even for a moment."³⁷ Everyday he did like this. Svarup and Ramanand pacified him, Svarup by singing a song and Ramanand by reciting a Shlok from *Krishna-karnamrita*, *Gita-govind* or Vidyapati.³⁸

³¹ *Ibid*, 16.

³² *Ibid*, 17.

³³ *Ibid*, 18.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 19.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 20.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 21.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 22.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 23 - 24.

SEARCH FOR KRISHNA IN A GARDEN

One day Mahaprabhu was going to the sea with the devotees to bathe. He was so much lost in *bhav* that he forgot where he was going. He had his left hand on the shoulder of Ramanand and was swinging and swaying in *prem* as he was going. On the way he saw a garden. In his *bhav* he took it to be Vrindavan and rushed into it. As soon as he went in, he was reminded of the night, in which Krishna had suddenly disappeared with Radha, while revelling with the gopis in the forest. Thinking of that night he was seized with the *bhav* of gopis in separation from Krishna. He was no more Sri Krishna Chaitanya. He was a gopi maddened in love, going about in search of Krishna and inquiring from the trees, creepers and the animals about Him.³⁹

He saw the mango, tamarind, *neem*, *tamal* and other trees and said to them, "You are all the residents of holy Vrindavan. You always sympathize with the people in their suffering and help them. You must have seen Krishna. Would you kindly tell me which way He has gone?" The trees did not reply. He thought they were of the same sex as Krishna. Therefore they were His friends. They would not go against His wish. The creepers were females. They might help.⁴⁰ So he inquired of them whether they had seen Krishna. They

³⁹ C. C., 3, 15, 28 - 29.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 30 - 32.

also remained silent. He thought that they were afraid of Krishna, because they were Krishna-dasis (servants of Krishna). Then he inquired of a doe.⁴¹ The doe also did not reply. He thought she was in grief of separation, because Krishna had left her as well. So she could not say anything.⁴² He saw the branches of some trees laden with fruits touching the ground. He thought they had seen Krishna and made obeisance to Him, but He walked away with Radha without making a response. So they felt aggrieved and remained lying on the ground.⁴³

He went a little farther. Suddenly he saw Krishna, a hundred thousand times more beautiful than Cupid, standing under a tree, with a bewitching smile on His lips and the flute in His hand. He fell senseless on the ground to see that ocean of beauty in high tide, threatening to sweep and swallow him. The *Sattvik bhavs* enveloped his entire body. Svarup and others tried to bring him back to consciousness. On regaining consciousness he looked all round and said, "Alas! Where is Krishna gone? I saw Him just now. Did He come only to make my heart a prisoner by His beauty and carry it away? Svarup! I am feeling very uncomfortable without my heart. Sing a song so that my heart returns to me."

⁴¹ Feminine of deer.

⁴² *Ibid*, 42.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 43 - 47.

Svarup sang the following lines of Gita-govind in sonorous voice—

*rase harimiha vihita vilasam /
smarati manomam krit parihasam//*

On hearing the song Mahaprabhu was charged with a *bhav* current and began to dance. He asked Svarup to sing repeatedly and he sang. Neither the song stopped, nor the dance. When Prabhu looked very much tired, Svarup stopped singing. He did not sing even on his insistence. The devotees took him back to his place.

CRAVING FOR THE NECTAR OF KRISHNA'S LIPS

One day Mahaprabhu went to the temple of Jagannath for *darshan*. At the gate of the temple the gate-keeper made obeisance to him. Mahaprabhu held him by the hand and said entreatingly, "Brother! Where is Krishna? Show me my Krishna."⁴⁴ He said, "He is here. Come. I will show Him." He took him inside the temple. Pointing towards Jagannath he said, "Look, there He is." He saw in Jagannath Sri Krishna with the flute in His hand.

This was the time for the *bhog* of Jagannath. *Bhog* was offered and Arati was done. The Pujari gave *prasad* to Mahaprabhu. He took a little and gave the

⁴⁴ C. C., 3, 16, 74 - 75.

rest to Govind to be carried. The *prasad* tasted a thousand times better than nectar. It brought about horripilation and the other Sattvik-*bhavs*. He wondered how the *prasad* tasted so sweet and caused such Sattvik-*bhavs*. He said, "It must be due to the nectar of the lips (*adharamrita*) of Krishna, which was mixed with it. He went home.

In the evening, when the devotees came to him, he distributed the *prasad* to them. They were surprised to experience the supernatural smell and taste of the *prasad*. Mahaprabhu explained that its supernatural character was due to the touch of the lips of Krishna. He then asked Ramanand to recite the Shlok 'suratavardhanam' etc. (Bh., 10, 31, 14), describing the character of the nectar of the lips of Sri Krishna. Mahaprabhu was ecstasized and seized with the *bhav* of the gopis to hear the Shlok. Wailing like the gopis he began to describe the character of Krishna's lips according to the Shlok.⁴⁵

He said, "O Krishna! Listen, what Your tender lips do to me. They affect my body, mind and soul and make me restless. They destroy my modesty, my *dharma* and my patience. They make me forget everything and crave for coition (*surata*)⁴⁶. Not to

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 109 - 111.

⁴⁶ C. C., 3, 16, 12. Surat must not be understood as lustful coition, but as coition in *prem*, which is opposed to lust, as light is opposed to darkness, though outwardly some activities in *prem* are similar to sexual activities.

speak of me and the other animate beings, your lips, like a magician, work wonders even with the inanimate. They change the flute, which is but a piece of bamboo, into an animate being by imparting it mind and senses. You mischievously feed the flute with the nectar of Your lips. The flute mixes the nectar with its tone and forcibly draws me to you by making me shamelessly renounce my *dharma*. Krishna! Do not be mischievous. Be good enough to bless me with the nectar of Your lips without making me dance at the beck and call of a piece of bamboo.”⁴⁷

Wailing like this Mahaprabhu’s greed in the *bhav* of Radha for the nectar of the lips of Krishna further increased. He began to say to Ramanand, “Sakhi! I always yearn for the nectar of Krishna’s lips. I am deeply concerned, because this undeserving piece of bamboo drinks it all, while it is denied to me, who deserves. Sakhi! I do not know what austerities the bamboo performed in its past lives, what *japa* it did to obtain the nectar. I shall do the same *japa* and practise the same austerities or I shall die without the nectar.”⁴⁸

THE MADDENING SMELL OF KRISHNA’S BODY

On the full-moon night in the month of Vaishakh⁴⁹ Mahaprabhu entered the Jagannath Vallabh garden with

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 124.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 128 - 139.

⁴⁹ The first month of the Hindu calendar (April - May).

the devotees. The beauty of the garden in moon-light was indescribable. Mahaprabhu thought in the *bhav* of Radha that he was in Vrindavan. Vrindavan was shining in moon-light. The cool breeze was blowing. The trees and creepers were swaying. The birds were twittering, the peacock was dancing with its wings unfurled and the flowers were blooming in glee. It looked as if they were all rejoicing in the thought that Krishna was about to come and were rehearsing the welcome they would extend to Him. How could Mahaprabhu remain aloof? He asked Svarup to sing the *lavanga-lata*⁵⁰ song Svarup sang and he began to dance.⁵¹

Dancing he went from tree to tree. When he went under the Ashok tree, he suddenly saw Krishna. He ran towards Him. He smiled and disappeared.⁵² But He left the sweet smell of His body. The smell was so fascinating and enchanting that it made him fall senseless on the ground.⁵³ He was so maddened by the smell that even after regaining consciousness, he began to pursue it from one end of the garden to the other in the hope that he would find Krishna, but he did not. He began to curse the smell and say in the *bhav* of Radha, "The smell is a dacoit. Krishna sends it to the gopis so that it may by entering through their

⁵⁰ A song from 'Gita-govind' describing Basanta-rasa.

⁵¹ C. C., 3, 19, 78 - 79.

⁵² *Ibid*, 80 - 81.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 82 - 83.

nose capture their heart and forcibly bring them to Him. But He is so cruel that He does not appear before them. He takes pleasure in so maddening them with the smell that they forget the way to their homes and run here and there in search of Him, without finding Him.”⁵⁴ The whole night passed weeping and wailing like this. With great difficulty Svarup and Ramanand could revive his outward consciousness and made him bathe and go to the temple of Jagannath for *darshan*.

THE FLUTE CALLS: MAHAPRABHU RUNS AND ASSUMES THE SHAPE OF A TORTOISE IN BHAV

One day Svarup and Ramanand remained with Mahaprabhu till midnight, singing songs and reciting the Shlokas according to his *bhav*. At midnight they went home, after making him lie down to sleep. Govind slept outside in front of his room. Mahaprabhu passed the whole night in loud *Sankirtan*. Suddenly he heard the sound of Krishna’s flute. Attracted by the sound, he ran towards it. As before he mysteriously crossed the three gates of the house of Kashi Misra, locked from inside, and went out.⁵⁵

When Govind did not hear the sound of his *kirtan* for sometime, he opened the door of his room. He was aghast to find that he was not there. He went out

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 92 - 93.

⁵⁵ C. C., 3, 17, 9 - 10.

and informed Svarup and the other devotees. They started a search and found him lying unconscious amongst the cows at a place to the North of Sinhadvar. His hands and feet had shrunk and gone inside his stomach. The hairs of his body stood on end, tears streamed out of his eyes and froth came out of his mouth. Outwardly he lay in stupor, unconscious and motionless like a tortoise, but inwardly infinite bliss reigned in his heart.⁵⁶ The cows had surrounded him and were smelling his body. The devotees tried to remove them, but could not. Therefore they lifted and brought him home. For a long time they sang *Sankirtan* to him. Then his outward consciousness returned and his body resumed its normal condition.⁵⁷

He looked all round and said to Svarup, "Svarup! Where have you brought me? I heard the flute and went to Vrindavan. I saw Krishna blowing the flute in the pasture land. Radha got Krishna's gesture from the flute and went into a *kunja* (bower) with Her *Sakhis*. Krishna also went in to sport with them. I went behind Him. My heart was stolen by the jingling sound of their ornaments and their sweet and humorous talks. I was lost in the bliss of the moment, when you

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 15 - 16.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 17 - 20. Some believe that such unheard of *Sattvik-bhavs* in Mahaprabhu were the result of Madanakhya *Mahabhav*, peculiar and natural to Radha alone, which He had borrowed from Her, but which He did not have the capacity to bear.

made a tumultuous noise and brought me here. I could no more hear their nectarean voice.”⁵⁸

Mahaprabhu then said to Svarup, “Svarup! My ears are thirsty. Give them some nectar.” Svarup recited in sonorous voice the *Bhagavat* Shlok, 10, 29, 40 and the *Krishna-Karnamrita* Shlok 42 to quench his thirst.

IN THE FISHERMAN'S NET

Once on a moon-lit night Mahaprabhu was going from one garden to another near the sea with the devotees, singing or hearing the devotees sing the songs of Rasa-lila or reciting the Shloks of Rasa-lila. After the Shloks of Rasa-lila, when the devotees began to recite the Shlokas pertaining to the pastimes of Krishna and the Gopis in the waters of Yamuna, he was so much overwhelmed with the *bhav* of the Shloks that he began to see Yamuna in place of the sea and the pastimes of Krishna and the Gopis in the Yamuna. He felt attracted by the pastimes and with a bounce plunged into the sea. This happened so quickly and mysteriously that the devotees could know nothing about it. They only knew that Mahaprabhu, who was with them only a moment before, had suddenly disappeared from their midst. How and where he had gone remained a mystery. The devotees rushed into different directions to search him out. Svarup and some devotees went along the bank towards Konark. After they had gone

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 21 - 26.

far they saw a fisherman coming. He sometimes laughed, sometimes wept, sometimes sang 'Hari, Hari' and danced like one, who had gone mad. That appeared to Svarup like a silver lining in the clouds of despair and despondency. Thinking that the fisherman was perhaps blessed with the touch of Mahaprabhu, he went near him and said, "Brother! What is the matter with you? Why are you like this? Have you seen a man going somewhere on this side?"

The fisherman said, "I have seen not a man, but something like him. I do not know what it was, whether the dead body of a man or a ghost. I had spread out my net in the sea to catch fish. When I pulled the net out, I felt that it was too heavy. I thought that a big fish was caught. But when the net came out, I was frightened to see the dead body of a man in it. I happened to touch the dead body while pulling out the net. As soon as I touched it, its ghost clung to me. Since then I have tremor in my body and tears continue to flow from my eyes. I cannot say what has happened to me."

Svarup said, "Tell me what the ghost looked like."

The fisherman said, "The ghost looked like the dead body of a man. It was five or seven 'hands' (7 to 10 feet) tall, Its hands and feet were three times as big as the ordinary hands and feet. The joints of its hands and legs were loose. They looked like skin without bones. Its eyes were turned upwards like the eyes of the dead, but it sometimes made a peculiar

sound. Since the time the ghost attacked me, I feel that the world is non-existent and my body also does not exist. If I die, I do not know what will happen to my children. Therefore I am going to an Ojha,⁵⁹ who can drive away the ghost. I fished everyday at night remembering Nrisinhadeva. No ghost ever had the courage to attack me. But this ghost is so strange that it clings to me all the more when I remember Nrisinha. I warn that you must not go that side, if you care for your life. The ghost will not spare you. On hearing the fisherman's account of the ghost, Svarup felt assured of the discovery of Mahaprabhu and heaved a sigh of relief. But in order to ask the fisherman to take him to the ghost, it was necessary to make him fearless. Therefore he said to him, "Brother! Do not worry. I am a big Ojha. I shall drive away the ghost in an instant." He uttered some *mantra* and put his hand over his head. Then he slapped him thrice and said, "The ghost has run away." The fisherman felt assured and calmed. Then Svarup said to him, "Brother! You are very fortunate. The man, whom you had taken to be a ghost, is no other than Sri Krishna Chaitanya. He has become like that due to *prem*. We have been looking for him. Kindly take us to him." The fisherman felt happy and took Svarup and the devotees to Mahaprabhu.

⁵⁹ One who pretends to cast out evil spirits by means of charms and incantations.

On reaching there Svarup saw Mahaprabhu lying in the same condition, in which the fisherman had described him. He started the *kirtan* of Krishna-nam in a loud voice along with the devotees. After some time Mahaprabhu got up with the outburst of a roaring sound and began to look all round. Not being able to see what he wanted, he began to wail, "Alas! Where have I come? I was in Vrindavan, witnessing the sports of Krishna and the *Gopis* in Yamuna. Thousands of Krishna and thousands of Gopis! One Krishna with each *Gopi*, both sprinkling water on each other and doing different kinds of *madhur-lila*. After their sports in water I was seeing their *vana-bhojan-lila*,⁶⁰ when I do not know how I came here." Wailing like this his outward consciousness returned. Then he looked at Svarup and said, "Svarup! why did you bring me here?"

Svarup told him all that had happened.

At the end he said, "Is it not funny that you enjoy Vrindavan-lila under the pretext of senselessness and we die with anxiety, fearing all the time that something untoward may happen to you? Come, let us go home." Then Svarup and the devotees happily took Mahaprabhu to Gambhira.

In this way Svarup lived with Mahaprabhu and served him all the time, whether it was day or night, whether in Gambhira or outside. Therefore in later

⁶⁰ Dining together in a forest as in a picnic.

period it was the *kadacha*,⁶¹ written by him, which became the main basis for writing about the *Anlyalila*⁶² of Mahaprabhu, as said by Sri Krishna Das Kaviraj himself in *Chaitanya-Charitamrita*.

ADVAITACHARYA'S GESTURE TO MAHAPRABHU

Mahaprabhu used to send Jagadanand to Navadvip every year with Jagannath's *prasad* for his mother and the other devotees. This time, when he returned from Navadvip, Advaitacharya sent to Mahaprabhu a gesture through him in the form of a riddle.⁶³ Mahaprabhu came from Golok to distribute *prem* to the *jivas* at the invocation of Advaitacharya and withdrew Himself and His Lila on this gesture.

The riddle was read out to Mahaprabhu before the devotees. It was couched in such words and figurative language that no one could understand it except Mahaprabhu. Everyone laughed to hear it. Mahaprabhu also laughed and said, "Let his will be done." It was laughed away by everyone as a piece of humour, but Svarup fell into anxiety. He said, "Prabhu! I could not understand the riddle. Would you kindly explain?"

⁶¹ Notes.

⁶² Lila pertaining to the last days.

⁶³ C. C., Antya, 19, 16 - 17.

Mahaprabhu said, "Advaitcharya is the pandit of Agam Shastra. According to the rules of Agam Shastra the god is invoked and worshipped. When the worship is over, he is relinquished. This is perhaps the import of the riddle. But I also could not understand what it really means."⁶⁴

Mahaprabhu added the last sentence only to confuse the devotees. Advaitcharya meant, "Prabhu! The purpose for which I called You is now fulfilled. Everyone has been blessed with *prem*. The easiest path for the deliverance of *jivas* from the bondage of Maya, that is, the *kirtan* of Your Name, has also been set. Therefore You can now retire to Golok."⁶⁵

THE CLIMAX

Since then Mahaprabhu's Radha- *bhav* in separation from Krishna increased ten times. He always thought in Radha-*bhav* that Krishna had gone to Mathura and wept and wailed. Just as Radha wailed before Her Sakhis Lalita and Vishakha, Mahaprabhu wailed before Svarup and Ramanand and said, "Sakhi! Show me my Krishna, that embodiment of beauty, the cynosure of the eyes of the Vraj-gopis, Who wears a peacock feather on His crown and a garment, bright yellow like lightening, on His body, Whose hair is bedecked with fragrant flowers and Whose bewitching smile

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 24 - 26.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 19 - 20.

steals the hearts of gopis.⁶⁶ Sakhi! I cannot live for a moment without seeing Him. I want to die. But Brahma is so cruel. He does not let me die.⁶⁷ Krishna also is cruel. He has no scruples in killing with His own hands a *gopi*, who sacrificed every thing for His sake and with whom He lived so long, by suddenly going away from her, without turning even once to look at her."⁶⁸

Once he wailed like this till midnight. When Svarup sang a song relating to the union of Radha-Krishna, He was somewhat consoled. Then Svarup made him lie down to sleep in his room and closed the door from outside. Ramanand went home. Svarup and Govind slept outside the room.

But there was no sleep for Mahaprabhu. He chanted the name of Krishna throughout the night. The pain he suffered in separation from Krishna grew more and more. When the pain became too intense, he began to rub his face against the wall. His cheeks began to bleed,⁶⁹ but he did not know. He did not know what he was doing. He knew only the pain, he was feeling in separation. He wanted to say something, but his throat was choked. He could only make the sound "go, go."⁷⁰ Svarup and Govind heard the sound. They went in. They were aghast to see his face bleeding. They

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 35 - 37.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 41 - 42.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 47 - 48.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 55 - 56.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 57.

knew that it was the result of divine madness; Mahaprabhu did not know what he did. They conferred with the devotees to devise ways and means for preventing him from doing any such thing again. It was decided that in order to prevent him from doing this Shankar Pandit should be made to sleep with him.⁷¹

Mahaprabhu could not now rub his face against the wall or do anything else to cause injury to himself and anxiety to the devotees. But his agony in separation from Krishna in Radha-*bhav* had now reached the climax. Inspite of what Svarup and Ramanand did to alleviate his suffering, it now became impossible for him to remain without Krishna even for a moment. Therefore one day he rushed with the speed of lightening to the temple of Jagannath to embrace Jagannath, Who always appeared to him as Krishna, and disappeared.

THE DISAPPEARANCE

The disappearance of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is shrouded in mystery, because neither Vrindavan Das Thakur nor Krishnadas Kaviraj, his most important biographers, say anything about the manner of his disappearance. The general belief is that he merged

⁷¹ C. C., 3, 19, 63 - 65.

with the deity Jagannath. Writers like Jayanand and Dr. D. C. Sen, find it difficult to believe this, and have fabricated their own stories regarding the disappearance. But the belief is not entirely without foundation.

Achyutanand, a contemporary of Sri Chaitanya, writes in his *Shunya-samhita* that he merged with Jagannath.⁷² Lochan Das writes the same in his *Chaitanya-mangal*.⁷³ Ishan Nagar, who was also a contemporary of Sri Chaitanya, writes in his *Advait Prakash*⁷⁴ that only a few days after the gesture of Advaitcharya was conveyed to Mahaprabhu, through a riddle, he rushed to the temple of Jagannath, shouting "Ha Nath!" As soon as he entered the temple, the doors of the temple automatically closed. After some time, when the doors opened, he was not to be seen. Everyone understood that he had disappeared." Ishvar Das, a later writer, has also written in his *Chaitanya Bhagavat* that Sri Chaitanya merged in Jagannath.⁷⁵

Whatever the truth about the manner of the disappearance of Sri Chaitanya, one thing, which lends support to the general belief about his merging with the deity, and which may also be the most important cause of the belief, is that no trace of his body was

⁷² *Shunya-Samhita*, Chap. I.

⁷³ *Chaitanya-mangal*, Shesha Khanda, pp. 116 - 117.

⁷⁴ *Advait Prakash*, Chapter XXI, p. 95.

⁷⁵ *Chaitanya Bhagavata*, Chap. VI.

ever found. If the body was actually buried in the temple secretly as Dr. D. C. Sen suggests,⁷⁶ it is unbelievable that Maharaja Prataparudra would not have raised a memorial on it, befitting the dignity of his empire and the personality of Sri Chaitanya.

⁷⁶ D. C. Sen: *Chaitanya and His Age*, p. 264.

GLOSSARY

Abhisheka: Bath ceremony.

Acharya: Spiritual preceptor.

Adharamrita: Remains of food eaten by a Vaishnava.

Adhivas-kirtan: Ceremonious *kirtan* prior to *ashtaprahar-kirtan*.

Aishvarya: Lordliness and grandeur.

Ananda: Transcendental bliss.

Aparadha: Offense.

Arati: Ceremony of waving the lights before the deity.

Asana: 1) Prescribed posture for sitting still at ease for a long time. 2) A carpet or mat to sit on.

Ashtaprahara-kirtan: Non-stop *kirtan* for twenty-four hours.

Atma: Soul.

Avadhuta: Devoted to God, but disregardful of ceremonies and regulations of *shastras*.

Babaji: A man, who has forsaken the world for the sake of God.

Bhagavan: God.

Bhagavat-saptah: Reading of the whole of *Srimad Bhagavatam* in seven days.

Bhakta: A devotee.

Bahirvasa: An outer garment worn round the waist and reaching down to the knees.

Bhajan: Religious practice for the attainment of a religious end.

Bhajan-kuti: Cottage for performing *bhajan*.

Bhava: Trans-psychological religious emotion.

Bhek: Vaishnava Sannyasa.

Bhiksha: Alms collected by begging.

Bhoga: Food offered to the deity.

Chakra: Wheel (*Sudarshana Chakra*).

Chadar: A sheet of cloth worn over the upper portion of the body.

Chamara: The tail of a Tibetan yak, used as fly-brush.

Chandan: Sandalwood powder or paste.

Chandi: Divine Mother.

Charanamrita: The water in which the feet of the deity or a Vaishnava is washed.

Crora: Ten million.

Dakshina: A present given to a Brahmin or a priest to secure completion of a sacrifice or religious performance.

Dana: Toll or tax.

Danda: Bamboo staff carried by the *sannyasis*.

Dandavat: Prostrated obeisance.

Darshan: Seeing, specially seeing the deity, a sadhu or a holy place.

Dasya-rasa: Relish of a relationship cultivated under the sentiment of being a servant of the Lord.

Dham: The dwelling place of the Lord.

Dharma: Religion, principle, duty.

Dhoti: A sheet of cloth worn over the lower portion of the body.

Digvijayi: World conqueror in learning.

Diksha: Giving or receiving *mantra*, being initiated.

Gada: Mace.

Gauda: Another name for Bengal.

Ghee: Clarified butter.

Grihastha: Householder.

Gopi: A love-intoxicated damsel of Vrindavan, a female cowherd.

Harisabha: Place for religious gatherings.

Homa: Fire sacrifice.

Ishta: The deity one worships exclusively.

Japa: Mantra-meditation while counting on beads.

Jiva: Living entity.

Jnana: Knowledge.

Kamandalu: An earthen or wooden water-pot used by ascetics.

Kantha: The word literally means 'rags,' with which a Vaishnava Sannyasi covers his body.

Kanthi: A necklace of *tulasi* beads worn by Vaishnavas.

Karatal: Cymbals.

Karma-kanda: Ceremonial acts and sacrificial rites prescribed by the Shastras for the achievement of certain ends.

Katha: Spiritual discourse, talks.

Kaupin: A piece of cloth with a cord used as underwear.

Kaviraja: The physician trained in the Ayurveda, the Vedic Science and art of medicine.

Khol: An oval shaped drum generally used in *sankirtan*.

Kirtan: Chanting the Names of the Lord or singing hymns in His praise.

Kirtaniya: One who is proficient in performing *kirtan*.

Kunda: Pond or small lake.

Kunthi: Staff with a brass plate bearing some holy symbols attached to it at the top.

Kuti: Cottage.

Lac: One hundred thousand.

Lila: Pastime (specially used for the transcendental pastimes of the Lord.)

Lila-smarana: A form of *sadhana* in which the *sadhaka* devotes himself exclusively to meditation of the divine *lila* of Radha-Krishna as performed during 24 hours every day.

Lota: Small metallic container.

Madhukari: A form of begging specially prevalent in Vraja. The saint begs for pieces of bread from several houses like the bee that collects nectar from several flowers. He refuses to accept the whole meal from a particular house.

Madhura: Sweet.

Madhura-rasa: Relish of a relationship cultivated under the sentiment of being a woman having intimate and loving relationship with Krishna.

Mahabhagavata: A *siddha* saint.

Mahabhava: The highest state of *Madhurya-Bhakti*, characterizing the maids of Vraja. The highest state of *mahabhava*, which is called '*madanakhiya*', characterizes only Sri Radha.

Mahanta: Head of an *Ashram*.

Mahatma: A saint.

Mahotsava: Grand festival.

Manjari: *Gopi*, who is exclusively devoted to Radha and who loves Krishna only because Radha is devoted to Him.

Mantra: Sacred text or words repeatedly recited to attain a spiritual end.

Math: A kind of monastery.

Maya: The external illusory energy of the Lord.

Mridanga: An oval shaped drum generally used in *sankirtan*.

Mukti: Deliverance from the bondage of Maya.

Murti: The image of the Lord.

Nagar: A young man to whom women are attracted.

Nagar-sankirtan: The performance of *sankirtan* through the city or village.

Nagari: A young woman to whom men are attracted.

Nikunja-mandira: The place of meeting of Radha and Krishna in the forest; a retreat for lovers.

Nupura: A tinkling ornament worn round the ankles.

Ojha: The quack credited with the knowledge of incantations and efficacious herbs which are sometimes found useful in curing diseases and other afflictions.

Padma: Lotus.

Parampara: Disciplic succession.

Parikrama: Circumambulation of a holy place or temple.

Parshadas: The eternal companions of the Lord.

Patha: Reading.

Prasada: Food, which becomes sanctified after being offered to the deity.

Prema: Love.

Puja: Worship.

Pujari: Priest.

Purashcharan: This is a religious practice calculated to push us forward in our spiritual life. It is generally performed during an eclipse, and consists of *Japa*, *Homa*, *Tarpana*, *Abhiseka* and *Brahmanabhojan*.

Puri: A sort of bread fried in ghee.

Raganuga-Bhakti: *Raganuga* is spontaneous Bhakti as against *Vaidhi* or ritualistic Bhakti, which is mechanical. The former flows from *raga* or continuous loving attachment to the Lord, the latter is controlled by the rules and regulations laid down in the scriptures.

Raja: King.

Rasa: Transcendental relish due to loving relationship with the Lord.

Rasa-lila: Circular dance of the *gopis* with Krishna.

Rishis: Men of God-realization, who lead godly life.

Sadhaka: One practising religious discipline for the realization of the Lord.

Sadhana: Practice of religious discipline for the realization of the Lord.

Sadhu: Saint.

Sakhi: Girl-friend.

Sakhya-rasa: Relish of a relationship cultivated under the sentiment of being a friend or companion of Krishna.

Samadhi: 1) State of deep meditation without any outer consciousness. 2) The tomb of a saint.

Sattvika-bhavas: External signs of internal emotion attendant upon Krishna-prema. They are *stambha* (stupor), *sveda* (perspiration), *romancha* (thrilling of the body), *svara-bhang* (break of the voice), *vepatha* (trembling), *vaivarnya* (change of color), *ashru* (tears), and *pralaya* (loss of consciousness). Sri Jiva Goswami says that *pralaya* causes cessation of outward action, but not of inward feeling for Krishna (*Priti-sandarbha*).

Sampradaya: School of devotional line identified by a

disciplic succession.

Sanskara: Effect of actions in the present or previous life on the mind.

Sankirtan: Congregational chanting of the Holy Names of the Lord or singing to glorify Him.

Sarovara: Pond.

Satsanga: Association of holy persons.

Seva: Devotional service.

Shastras: Scriptures.

Shal-patra: Leaf of a timber-plant.

Shankha: Conch-shell.

Shanta-rasa: Relish of the sentiment of being faithful towards one's God.

Shikha: Tuft of hair overgrown on the crown of the head.

Siddha: Those who are accomplished in *sadhana* and have realized the end.

Siddha-deha: Transcendental body.

Siddha mahapurusha: One accomplished in *bhajan*.

Siksha-guru: Guru who teaches, but does not give *mantra*.

Sinhasana: Throne or altar.

Sloka: Sanskrit verse.

Snana: Bath.

Stotra: A hymn of praise.

Stuti: A hymn of praise.

Sutra: Thread, aphorism, axiom.

Svabhava: Natural *bhava*.

Tantrik: A follower of *tantras* or sacred books prescribing a code of religious ceremonies particularly for the worship of Shiva and Durga.

Tattva: Metaphysical principle or reality as it is.

Thakur: The Lord.

Thal: A metallic flat dish.

Tilaka: Consists in the bearing of marks of sandal paste or of *gopi-chandan* (the holy earth of Sri Vrindavan), on the different limbs, the paste being hallowed by the utterance of the holy names of the Lord in the course of the smearing process.

Tola: School for teaching Sanskrit.

Tulasi: A sacred plant of which the leaves are a necessary accompaniment of any food offered to the Lord.

Tulasi-mancha: Raised mound of earth for planting Tulasi.

Upasana: Mode of worship.

Upasaka: One doing *upasana*.

Utsava: Celebration.

Vaishnava: The word literally means 'worshipper of Vishnu,' the Eternal Principle that pervades the worlds.

Vairagi: One who has renounced the world.

Vatsalya-rasa: Relish of a relationship cultivated under the sentiment of being the father or mother of Krishna.

Vigraha: The form of the Deity.

Viraha: Separation.

Vrajavasi: A person born in Vraja, or the resident of Vraja.

Yajna: A fire oblation or religious offering.

Yamaraja: The Regent of Death, the demigod of departed spirits.

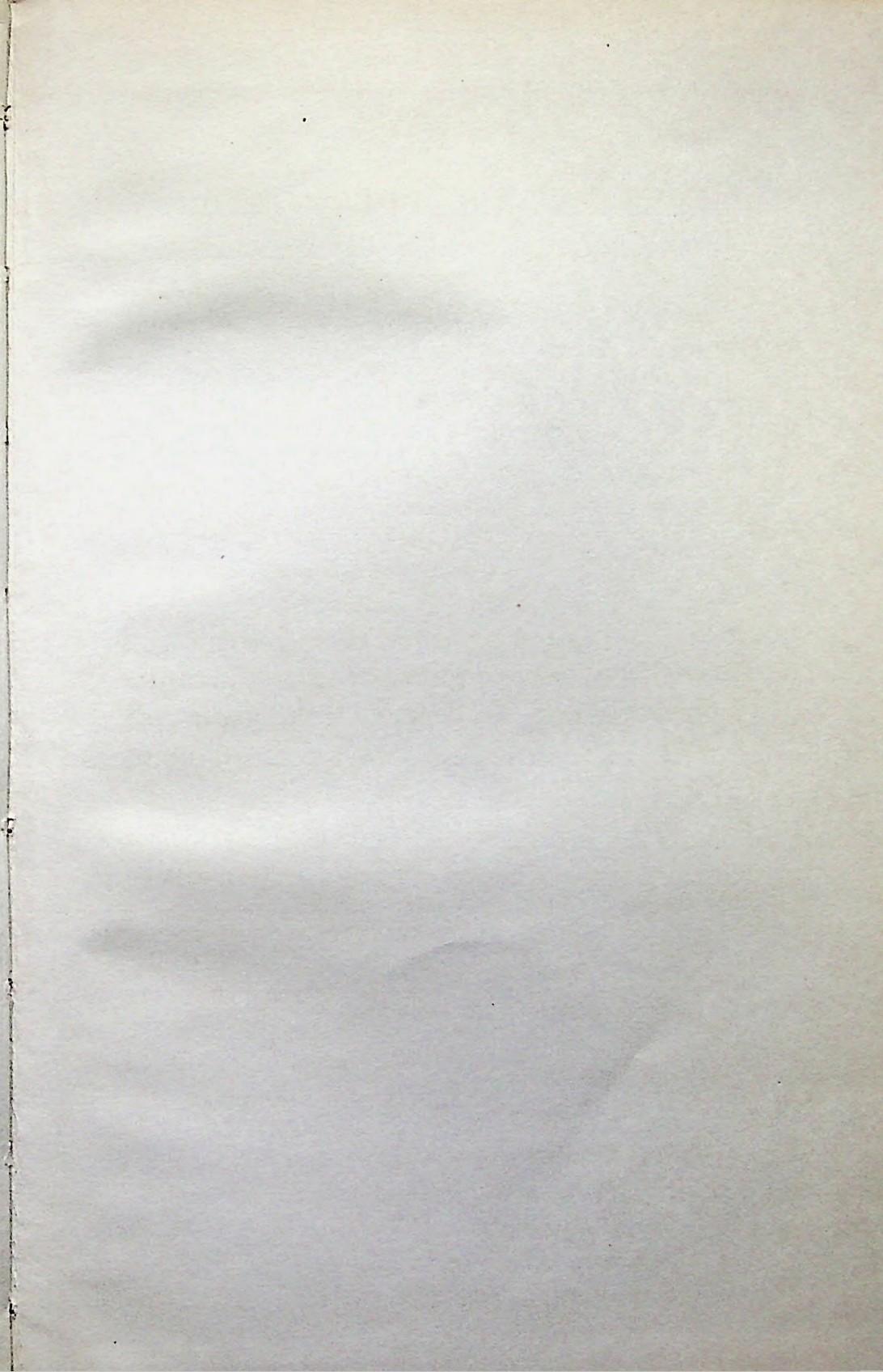
Yugas: Cycles of creation—viz., the Satya, the Treta, the Dvapara and the Kali.

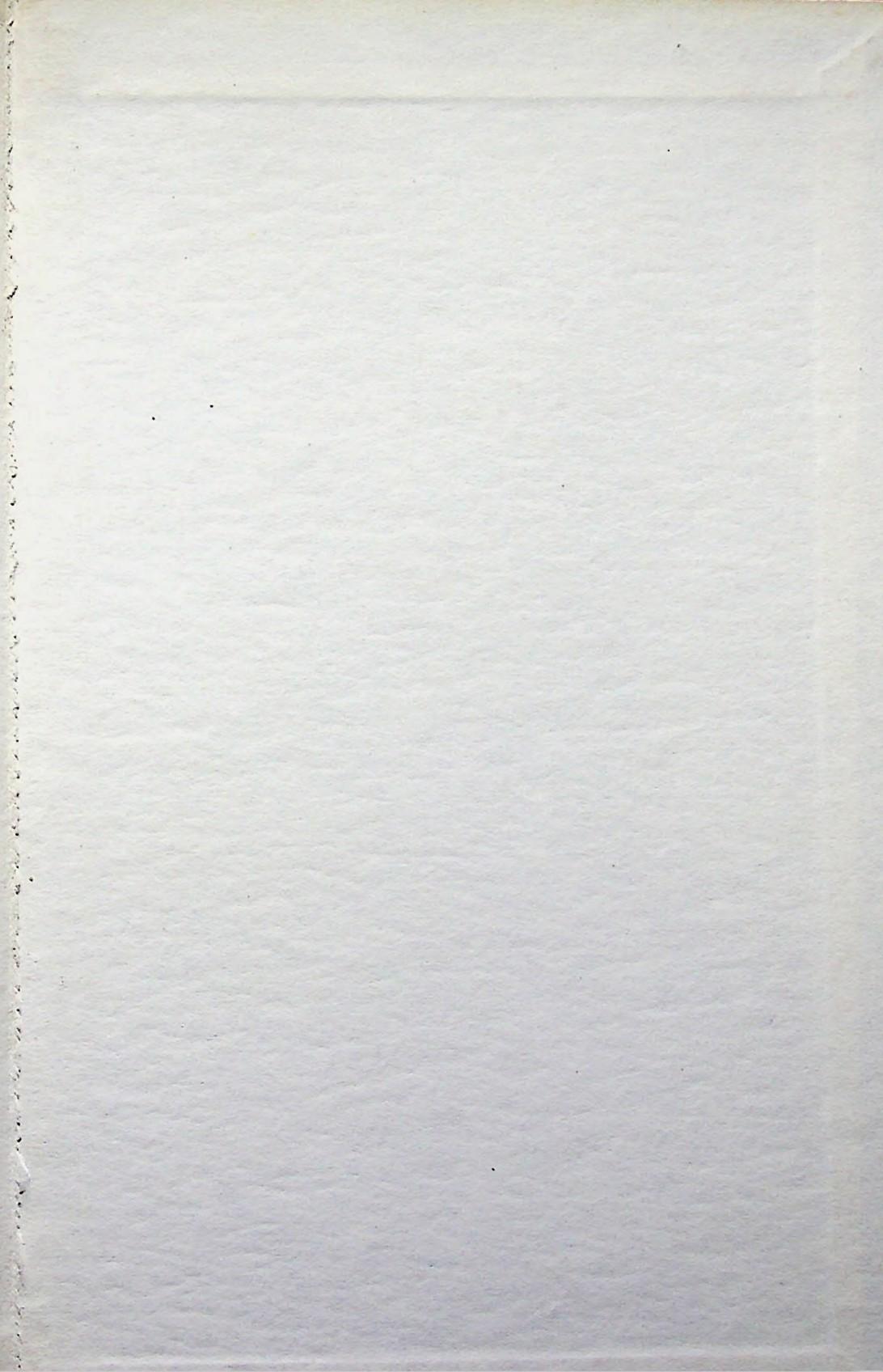
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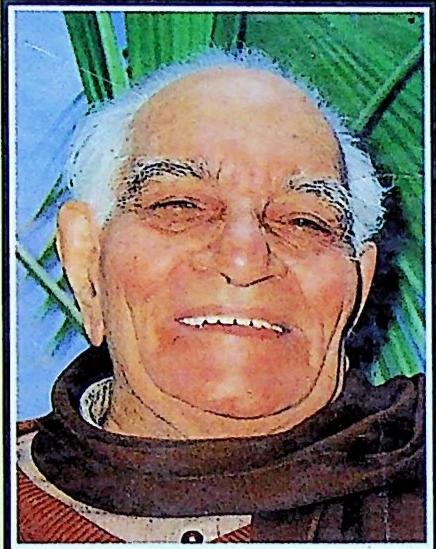
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Born in 1909, Dr. O.B.L. Kapoor had strong leanings towards the Advaitic philosophy of Saṅkara. In August 1931, when he was working as a research scholar in the University of Allahabad, he met his guru Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, who pulled him out of his Advaitic moorings and initiated him into Bhakti.



On his advice and under his close supervision he wrote a thesis on the Philosophy of Śrī Caitanya. The thesis was approved by the Allahabad University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Dr. Kapoor has the unique distinction of being the first Doctor of Philosophy of this prestigious University.

He worked as Research Fellow at the Indian Institute of Philosophy, D. Litt. Scholar, University of Allahabad, and Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy, B.R. College, Agra till 1951, after which he joined U.P. Educational Service Class I and worked as Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy at the K.N. Govt. College, Gyanpur (Varanasi) and Principal, Govt. College, Gyanpur/Rampur till his retirement in 1967. Since 1967 he has been living in Vṛndāvana and writing books and articles in Hindi and English on topics relating to Bhakti. He has written more than 30 books and a large number of articles, published in different journals. His writings have been widely appreciated.